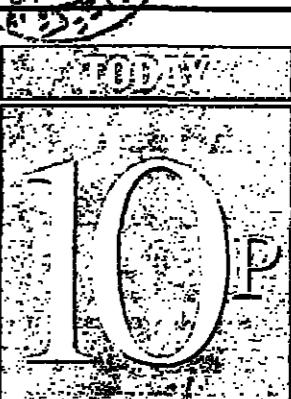
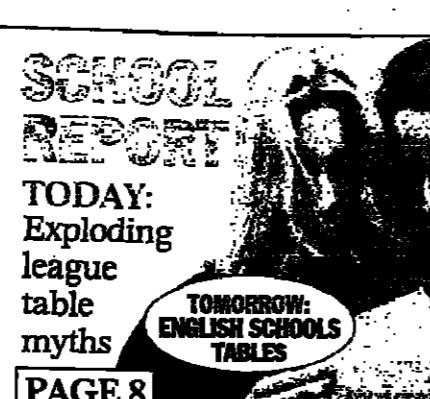


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Apology over Formula One fiasco

Blair promises tough rules on party funding

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND NICHOLAS WATT

TONY BLAIR today follows up a public apology for his handling of the Formula One debacle with the promise of a swift shake-up of the political funding system designed to give Britain a "healthier democracy".

After going on television yesterday to "take full responsibility" for an affair that has led to the worst crisis of his premiership, Mr Blair today backs national limits on amounts spent by the parties, "modest" ceilings on individual and company donations, and the publication of the names of donors and the amounts they give.

The moves mark a sustained effort by Mr Blair to recover his moral authority in the country, which Labour clearly fears may have been undermined.

Writing in *The Times* Mr Blair says that, if necessary, he will legislate to force all parties to open up their books about future donations in order to ensure a "level playing field". He calls for the "toughest possible set of rules" about funding, and stringent measures to prevent loopholes and avoidance through a proper policing of the system. He even suggests that business funding might be ended altogether in his vision of a "completely new world of electoral finance".

Yesterday, obviously shaken by the affair, Mr Blair admitted he had failed to focus seriously enough on the issue and agreed that the way information had emerged in a piecemeal way was unsatisfactory.

He admitted that he was "hurt and upset" because he had not expected that people would "impugn his motives". But he accepted that it had not been handled well

and he took full responsibility. However, Mr Blair remained unrepentant both about the decision to allow a longer exemption to Formula One for a European-wide ban on tobacco advertising and sponsorship, and about his decision to meet Bernie Ecclestone, the boss of Formula One, on October 16 when the Government was considering ways of preventing the proposed ban damaging British sport.

It was a high-risk decision by Mr Blair to offer himself for an interview with John Humphrys on BBC's *On the Record* programme.

We will learn the lessons. Out of the difficulties of the past week can come changes that make for a healthier democracy

Tony Blair writes, page 22

It was driven by fears that his strong personal standing with the public, his biggest asset, was in danger of being damaged as a result of the row.

Within Downing Street there is huge regret that all the facts surrounding the Ecclestone donation, and the decision to turn down further gifts, were not released earlier, as some of Mr Blair's most senior aides had recommended.

Mr Blair admitted yesterday: "It should not have come out in dribs and drabs and we should have focused on this earlier... I am sorry about this issue. I should have

BBC interview, page 2
Peter Riddell, page 22

realised it was going to blow up into this kind of importance but I have honestly done what I thought was best for the country all the way through."

There were also clear indications last night that the policy which has caused all the trouble could still be changed. Mr Blair made plain that the outcome on the tobacco ban would be decided in negotiations with the European Union, and there were hints that the proposed ten-year exemption for Formula One could eventually be lowered.

In spite of a robust performance, in which he emphasised time and again that he would never change a policy purely because a Labour Party donor would benefit, the Prime Minister failed to clear away all the confusion and doubts that have surrounded the saga.

In the interview Mr Blair said for the first time that he had decided not to accept a further donation from Mr Ecclestone, on top of the £1 million he had given in January, as soon as the Government decided that it would push for an exemption for Formula One.

He also admitted that he wrote to Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, the day after the Ecclestone meeting saying that the position of sport and particularly Formula One would have to be protected. But he said that there was no conflict of interest at that time because the Government had not decided on the exemptions.

Mr Blair also said he was ready to publish the names of all Labour donors since 1992, provided the Conservatives did the same.

Kate Bushell: popular, talented and lively churchgoing teenager who loved sport and music

Walk to death, page 3

Compensation for workers

The Government will today admit that Britain broke European law on workers' rights for more than a decade, leaving the way for millions of pounds in compensation.

Public sector workers suffered sweeping cuts in pay and benefits when their jobs were transferred to the private sector in the 1980s.... Page 52

Henman's title

Tim Henman eased to victory at the national championships in Telford, while Pete Sampras confirmed his continuing domination of the world game.... Page 28

Saudi nurse is spared after death right waived

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

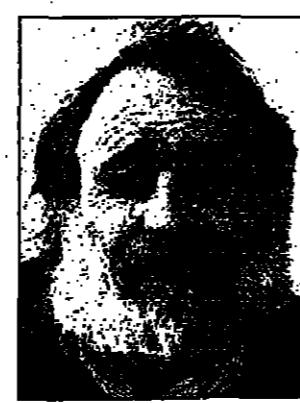
THE British nurse Deborah Parry, who was facing heading for murder in Saudi Arabia, had her life spared yesterday when the brother of her alleged victim told a court he was waiving his right to demand the death penalty.

Frank Gilford's action also removes the threat of 500 lashes from Lucille McLauchlan, who has already been convicted for her part in the killing.

Mr Gilford, brother of the alleged victim Yvonne Gilford, is now entitled to a £51.7 million (£700,000) settlement, described by some as "blood money", which was brokered with the help of Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary.

Ms Parry's life was saved in a two-hour hearing at the High Sharia Court in Al-Khor, before the judge, Sheikh Saleh Haidan. The procedure was divided into two sessions by a break for midday prayers.

Ghassan Al Awaji of the International Law Firm in Riyadh, who has power of attorney for Mr Gilford, pre-



Gilford: £700,000 deal

Yeltsin emerges as Iraq peacemaker

By IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON AND MICHAEL EVANS

PRESIDENT YELTSIN has promised to intervene in the confrontation between the United Nations and Iraq over weapons inspections.

The commitment was given in a weekend telephone call between the Russian leader and President Clinton.

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, also spoke on the phone to Yevgeni Primakov, the Russian Foreign Minister, and it was agreed that Moscow would use its "special relationship" with Iraq to try to resolve the crisis.

Ms McLauchlan, from Dundee, has already been sentenced to eight years plus the lashes, but this will be reduced because it would be unfair for her to get a more severe sentence than Ms Parry, allegedly the main culprit.

Lawyers on both sides are now awaiting the conviction and sentence of Ms Parry. The nurse can then either begin an 18-month appeal process or throw herself on the mercy of the King.

He told an audience in California that the showdown with Saddam over UN weapons

inspectors was not a replay of the Gulf War but a battle against organised forces of destruction.

Think about it in terms of the innocent Japanese who died in the subway when the sarin gas was released and how important it is for every responsible government in the world to do everything possible not to let big stores of chemical or biological weapons fall into the wrong hands," Mr Clinton said.

Eleven commuters died and 5,000 were injured more than two years ago when a religious sect released the nerve gas from their store of several tonnes of chemicals, estimated by the authorities to be enough to kill five million people.

Mr Clinton won the full support of Tony Blair for tough action against Saddam, during a telephone call over the weekend. Mr Clinton also spoke to France's President Chirac and asked him to intervene with Baghdad.

Israeli threat, page 12

Germ war stocks, page 13

Battlelines drawn over new Pegasus Bridge museum

By PETER FOSTER

THE battlelines are being drawn for fresh hostilities at Pegasus Bridge, the much fought over site of the first D-Day liberation from German occupation in the Second World War.

French authorities have now agreed to build a new museum to commemorate the recapture of Pegasus Bridge by airborne troops. Their decision is likely to rekindle a long-running and acrimonious campaign over the site and could

mean that shortly there will be rival museums pitching for the attention of veterans and tourists.

Until October, there had been for quarter of a century an Airborne Forces Museum in building leased from Arlette Gondree, present owner of the Pegasus Bridge cafe which was the first building in mainland Europe liberated from the Germans. The decision to build a new museum is intended to end the dispute between Mme Gondree and a vociferous group

of veterans who include Major John Howard, the man who led the airborne assault 50 years ago.

Mme Gondree, however, seems in no mood to be outflanked. Last night she attacked the new memorial which she said was in danger of becoming a theme park. "People can see the danger of a Disneyland," she said. She now plans a rival exhibition room on the first floor of the old museum to commemorate the D-Day events.

When the lease expired in June Mme

Gondree first tried to recapture the museum and, in an ensuing fracas, was allegedly thrown over a fence by its curator. Later, armed with a repossession order, she made a successful assault, sending the 8,000 exhibits to a storage depot in nearby Caen.

Major Howard, now 83, was very satisfied by the decision last night. "This news has cheered me up immensely," he said. "I'm very keen we get started immediately."



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THE TIMES MONDAY NOVEMBER 17 1997

Last walk of a friendly neighbour

Helpful pupil Kate was killed doing a good turn

By SIMON DE BRUNELLES

DARKNESS was beginning to fall as Kate Bushell put on her turquoise cagoule and told her parents she was going out for no more than 20 minutes to walk the neighbour's Jack Russell, Gemma.

She had volunteered so that the neighbours could go away for the weekend, a gesture friends said was typical of Kate who would go out of her way to help anyone. The route she took along Exwick Lane divides the private estate of modern red-brick boxes from the unspoilt countryside beyond.

Exwick is a sprawling suburb which meanders up the hillside on the other side of the river and railway line from Exeter city centre. At 4.30 on Saturday evening it would still have been possible to look out over the rooftops to the 11th-century cathedral of St Peter's.

When their daughter did not return Kate's parents Jeremy, 44, and Susan, 41, became concerned. The murder team of 80 officers, who yesterday sealed off the lane where the body was found and began house to house inquiries, have little to go on. They do not know whether Kate's killer was lying in wait for a victim, had followed her from



Maddern: he said Kate was a model pupil

home or may even have arranged to meet her in the unit lane.

The headteacher of St Thomas's High School where Kate was a "model" pupil said it had been the 14-year-old's ultimate ambition to go to Oxford. Steve Maddern said: "Kate Bushell certainly had the academic ability. She was a popular, talented and lively girl, and her murder hits at the core of our school."

More immediately, she had her debut with the school's basketball team to look forward to this week. She was also a member of the school

orchestra. Mr Maddern met Kate's parents yesterday afternoon. He described them as "distraught" and said: "One thing Kate's mother said to me was that you never had to remind her to do her homework. In fact she had done half of her weekend's homework before taking the dog for a walk."

A lone bouquet was tied to the gates of the 1,200 pupil high school with the words "Why? You will always be missed" written on a note attached to it.

Mr Maddern said: "Kate had a promising future and was a keen musician. She had a ready smile and was fun to be with, she was intelligent, co-operative and mature in her outlook. She was everything you could hope for in a student. Her loss will be felt throughout the school and we are making special assembly and counselling arrangements tomorrow to help students and staff come to terms with this dreadful tragedy."

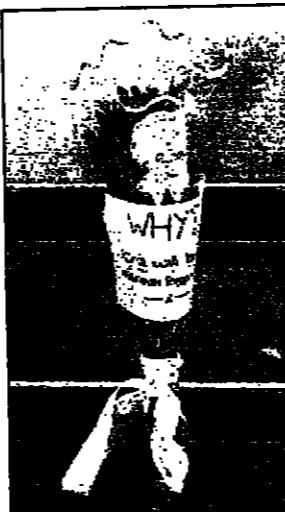
"Students and staff will be shocked and numbed by this awful news and our hearts go out to Kate's family and friends who will be devastated by the loss of one so young who had everything to live for. We can only hope that the police catch whoever is responsible for this sickenning crime as quickly as possible."

Prayers were said for her at the Sunday morning service held by the evangelical Isca Fellowship where the Bushell family worship. Church elder Stephen Randall said: "Kate was the least likely girl I can imagine this happening to. Our reaction is one of pure horror." Mr Randall, 36, described how Kate was involved in raising funds for Bosnian charities and was a regular helper at the church which meets in a local school.

The family moved to their modern, three-bedroom detached home in Exwick seven years ago. Mr Bushell is believed to have taken early retirement from his job with Devon county council's education department last year to devote his time to charitable work in Bosnia. Another neighbour said he had recently returned from an aid trip the Balkans. By an unlikely



Police standing guard at the lane in Exwick, where Kate Bushell, 14, was found murdered after walking a neighbour's dog. Below, flowers left at the scene, and the house to which the Bushells moved seven years ago



coincidence, the murder victim Lin Russell, who was killed in a frenzied hammer attack in Kent 18 months ago, lived in the same street when her husband, Shaun, was a lecturer at the university in the mid-1970s.

Many people walk their dogs in the same narrow lane which passes close to the Guide Dogs for the Blind's

national training centre at Cleve House.

Emma Browne, aged 14, one of Kate's best friends, laid flowers close to the spot where she was killed. She said: "I don't know how anyone could do something like this to Kate, she wouldn't harm anyone. It is such a shame because she was so brainy and she would have got very good GCSEs."

She would always help others and never do anything to put anyone else down. There have been rumours going around about the lane where she was killed. I would not have gone up there before this happened and I certainly will not do so now."

Other local youngsters said there had been rumours about people being chased down the narrow lane last year and they had stayed away from it.

Jill Daniel, a neighbour, said: "I did not know the girl very well but I did see her out walking a friend's dog while I was walking my spaniel. The lane where she was killed is very popular with dog walkers and leads down past the Blind Dog centre towards open fields."

Mother loses children on 'technicality'

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN has been ordered to uproot her children and take them to her estranged husband in France after he succeeded in using the Hague Convention on child abduction to secure their return. The children, aged 12 and 9, had only lived for nine months of their lives in France.

Hélène Lawrence left Newhaven on Friday to meet a High Court deadline for her to comply with the custody order obtained by her husband.

Normally the Hague Convention on child abduction is used in "tug of love" cases where one parent illegally seizes children from the other and absconds from their country of residence.

This order was granted to British-born David Lawrence, an electrical engineer living near Paris, after the couple decided to move to France last autumn with their two children, Edward, 12, and Gabrielle, 9. Nine months later, in July, the relationship broke down and Mrs Lawrence, 45, who had lived in Britain for 20 years although she is French-born, returned to their home in Hampshire.

Her husband successfully

made an application under the Hague Convention, although normally a custody order would not be granted where children had been resident in the country from which they had been removed for less than a year.

Mrs Lawrence, said yesterday that the children were devastated at having to leave school and their friends again.

She is in touch with Reunite,

the national council for abducted children, which is concerned that she fell foul of a legal technicality because she did not go to a solicitor with expertise in child abduction law.

Denis Carter, the director, said: "Our view is that the court should never have granted this application. "He should have looked more carefully at the case."

These children had only been in France for nine months and therefore it is questionable whether it could not really be called their country of habitual residence. But, because Mrs Lawrence had agreed willingly to follow her husband to France, that had counted against her in determining the children's habitual residence.



Sally Clayton: may be headed for Fuengirola

Missing girl, 13, may be on her way to Spain

By STEPHEN FARRELL

AIRPORTS and ports were put on alert yesterday for a 13-year-old girl believed to have run off with a customer she met at her mother's bar on the Costa del Sol.

Police fear Sally Clayton secretly kept in touch with the 47-year-old man known as Bruce after returning to her home in Harlow, Essex, from Fuengirola earlier this month.

The blonde teenager vanished with her passport and summer clothes to Saturday.

Sergeant Karen Brimson, of Essex Police, said Sally looked mature for her years and

could be travelling in a white Transit van. "The indications are that she is leaving the country, possibly heading back to Spain," she said.

Sally's mother, Sharon Walsh, who ran the Captain Hook bar in Fuengirola before returning to Britain on November 3, is said to be distraught. Her daughter had met "Bruce" often in the bar but, unknown to her, had kept in touch after they returned to Britain on the same ferry.

She discovered the relationship only when she found her missing on Saturday night and could not find her despite numerous telephone calls to friends.

Sergeant Brimson said that, although Sally had pretended to her mother that she had hated Spain, she told schoolfriends that she had a wonderful time.

"Pieces of the jigsaw are all fitting together. It has all been planned," she said. "She apparently changed a lot in Spain. She's only taken the more adult clothes, like skimpy dresses, and left her more childish things behind. She has told her schoolfriends she is not a schoolgirl anymore and is more like 21."

Italian taste for spice turns sour

From RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

ITALY, which invariably gives a warm welcome to British pop groups, should have been the place where the Spice Girls halted the sudden downward spiral of Geri Power and relaunched themselves on a wave of adoration. It didn't quite work out that way.

Instead, Italians gave them the thumbs down at the weekend, comparing them unfavourably to Oasis — "the real voice of today's neo-pop, not a passing synthetic creation" — who were rapturously received in Bologna and who are eagerly awaited today in Milan.

To make matters worse the girls' hotel on the Via Veneto was abuzz with rumours — denied all round — that Emma Bunton (Baby Spice), the alleged cause of the band's troubles because of her "relationship" with Simon Fuller,

their sacked manager, had chosen Rome to seal the band's demise by absconding with him. Hotel staff confirmed that Bunton had left the building "before dawn" for a "rendezvous", and had missed breakfast.

By coincidence — or not, since he presumably knew their European tour schedule by heart — Rome was where Mr Fuller took refuge after being fired.

But Bunton returned and appeared with the other four on television yesterday afternoon. Geri Halliwell (Ginger Spice) pointedly told the audience on the afternoon chat show *Domenica In* (Sunday In): "We are all together." But they performed only one song and left before the bemused presenter could ask them anything. He was left gazing at their departing backs

as they called "Arrivederci" over their shoulders.

Only a month ago, the Italians were halting the Spice Girls — along with the England football team — as the vanguard of Tony Blair's Britain. But the gloss appears to have worn off. "Not so spicy after all," said the headline in *La Repubblica* yesterday. "Spice Girls land in a desert of fans," declared *Il Messaggero*.

The contrast with Oasis could hardly have been sharper: "The difference is obvious," said *Corriere della Sera*. "Oasis are manipulated, like all pop groups, but they are original and have natural talent. The Spice Girls are merely a synthetic creation, dreamed up in a laboratory, with a limited life expectancy."

Abortion law faces challenge on raped teenager

By AUDREY MAGEE
IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

IRELAND is facing a repetition of a High Court battle over abortion, as a 13-year-old girl seeks permission to have a termination in Britain. The teenager, allegedly raped by a family friend last August, is three months pregnant.

She is under the care of the Health Board, which is seeking clearance from the courts. The case, disclosed yesterday, is certain to cause upheaval. In 1992, the High Court stopped a 14-year-old rape victim from travelling to Britain for a termination.

Thousands of people took to the streets to protest at the injunction. The Supreme Court eventually overturned the ban, concluding that she was at risk of suicide if she did not have an abortion, but the girl miscarried before reaching England.

Until 1992, abortion and information about its availability in Britain were banned in Ireland. Advertisements for British abortion clinics were regularly ripped out of magazines or blackened before sale. After the case, however, abortion became possible if the life of the mother was at risk, although there are no clinics openly performing abortions.

Two referendums held in 1992 now allow Irish women access to information about British clinics and the right to travel to them. This latest case will test whether the 1992 changes apply only to individuals or also to state bodies responsible for minors.

The girl at the centre of the current case is from an itinerant Dublin family. Her parents placed her in the care of the Health Board after the 24-year-old alleged rapist threatened to harm her if she reported the crime. The parents and the board agree that she should have an abortion.

Her father told an Irish Sunday newspaper: "We pray that God will forgive us for wanting the abortion, but we feel that our daughter will be tortured for the rest of her life if she has a rape baby." Pro-Life groups yesterday held special meetings to discuss the case.

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Whatever you think about foxes, you have to admire their guts.

Most huntsmen will tell you that the death of a fox is swift and painless.

"A quick nip in the back of the neck," they say, "and he's dead."

If only.

Foxhounds tend to go for the softer option.

The belly.

This brings the fox down, but doesn't immediately kill it.

Death usually occurs by disembowelment.

There are those who would argue that this is no more than a fox deserves.

After all, they say, foxes are themselves killers and need to be controlled.

Whilst it's true that foxes do occasionally take lambs, many of these are likely to be already dead.

(20% of lambs born each year die from hypothermia, malnutrition or disease, or are

stillborn.) And the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food estimates the number of lambs taken by foxes to be not significant.

The notion that hunting is necessary to control the fox population is equally unfounded.

At least 200,000 foxes are killed every year by shooting, snaring or in road accidents. Only about 15,000 are killed by hunting.



on November 28th.

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Ban hunting with dogs.

THE AIMS OF THE RSPCA ARE TO PREVENT CRUELTY AND PROMOTE KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

Royal Train could be heading for the sidings

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

THE Royal Train could be scrapped as part of a radical reform of the monarchy, according to one of the Queen's former aides.

The train was already under threat from MPs after official figures showed it had cost taxpayers £12.3 million in five years, an average of £67,000 for each of its 183 journeys.

The death of Diana, Princess of Wales has accelerated the reform of the monarchy, with a slimmed-down, cheaper version of the Royal Family now likely, says Simon Gimson, who left his post as head of the Palace Policy Unit a fortnight ago.

Abdication is ruled out, and so is skipping a generation to let Prince William take the crown instead of the Prince of Wales. But the Royal Family will be slimmed down naturally, he says: "We have a lot of active members of the Royal Family at the moment." Mr Gimson, speaking with the consent of the Palace, tells tonight's *Panorama* on BBC1.

"There are a good dozen and I think over time, if one looks

BUTLER HELPS TO CHOOSE MEMORIAL

The butler who served Diana, Princess of Wales for nine years and was honoured by the Queen for his services last week, is to help to decide on a fitting memorial to his former employer (Peter Foster writes). Paul Burrell, 39, became a confidant of the late Princess during his time at Kensington Palace. Downing Street has confirmed that Mr Burrell, awarded the Royal Victoria

in a bold, astute way at it, members of the Royal Family who are currently very active are going to get old ... if you look at the next generation coming through, there are far fewer who will be there to do public engagements in ten or 15 years."

Mr Gimson says the Princess's death has speeded reform. "The organisation probably needs to move down that track a little bit more rapidly than it has been until now," he says. "The Palace is

looking very carefully at specific changes, at radical changes, at gentle changes."

Mr Gimson confirms that the Palace is considering scrapping the Royal Train. He tells the programme: "Yes, and there may be decisions on that."

The 150-year-old train, run by a private American firm, Wisconsin Railways, has bullet-proof windows and steel-plated sides. Its top speed is 100mph, slower than the InterCity trains which the

Queen is said to favour. It has 14 coaches, but rarely are they all used.

Mr Gimson, who had been Special Assistant to the Queen's Private Secretary Sir Robert Fellowes, admits the Palace was concerned about public reaction in the week after the Princess's death. "We weren't sure which way the mood was going to swing," he says. "I think there was some hostility there originally."

He denies that the Royal Family failed to capture the public mood. "What they perhaps don't do is foghorn, is trumpet their emotions, they simply keep it to themselves and then at an appropriate time express themselves."

The Palace acknowledged the public mood for change and reform, he says. "People have been demanding a slimmed-down monarchy for a long time. It's going to happen inevitably." Mr Gimson adds that the Prince of Wales has for some time been taking on greater responsibility and says of the idea of skipping a generation to favour Prince William: "It isn't going to happen."



The Prince of Wales and Lady Tryon at a charity polo match in July 1991

Lady Tryon died after skin graft operation

By DOMINIC KENNEDY

LADY TRYON, described by the Prince of Wales as "the only woman who really understands me", died after a skin graft, it was disclosed yesterday.

She developed blood poisoning after the minor operation last week to treat bed sores. Lady Tryon, 49, nicknamed Kangaroo by the Prince when he met her in Australia, was confined to a wheelchair last year after becoming paralysed from the waist down when she fell from the first floor window of a private health clinic.

She died in the intensive care unit of the London Clinic. With her were her elder daughter, Zoe, who had flown from Australia, and her brother, Derek Harper. Lord Tryon — they married in 1973 — had filed for divorce in September on the ground that she caused him a stress-related illness.

Obituary, page 25

Anniversary is a testing time for the Queen

By ALAN HAMILTON

THIS week's golden wedding anniversary of the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh looks like turning into a major national event, despite the couple's own wish that it be an essentially family affair.

Several planned public appearances will be an opportunity to test public reaction to the monarchy after the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, when the Queen was criticised for her decision to remain at Balmoral while London saw an unprecedented outpouring of public grief.

Official celebrations begin tomorrow, when the Queen and the Duke travel to the City of London for a Guildhall lunch hosted by the Lord Mayor. In the evening, the couple and most of the remaining crowned heads of Europe will attend a gala concert at the Royal Festival Hall, masterminded by Prince Edward.

Ian Holm, Sir Donald Sinden and Dame Diana Rigg will perform extracts from Shakespeare's plays and sonnets to tell a story of courtship and marriage. Musical performances will range from John Dankworth and Dame Cleo Laine to the London Philharmonic Orchestra and operatic

soloists. The programme includes the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, *Tonight from West Side Story* and the love duet from Verdi's *Otello*.

On Thursday, the actual anniversary, the Queen and Prince will attend a televised thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey, where they were married. Afterwards, they are expected to go on a walkabout in Parliament Square around midday, before being greeted at 10 Downing Street by the Prime Minister and his wife. The four will then walk across Whitehall to Inigo Jones's Banqueting House, the last remaining vestige of the old royal palace of Whitehall, for a lunch hosted by the Government, at which most members of the Cabinet are expected to attend.

In the evening, the royal couple will finally achieve some degree of privacy, when they attend a ball in the newly restored apartments of Windsor Castle for themselves, their family, their guests and friends. For the Queen, the completion of fire damage repair to her favourite official residence is the best anniversary gift she could have wished for.

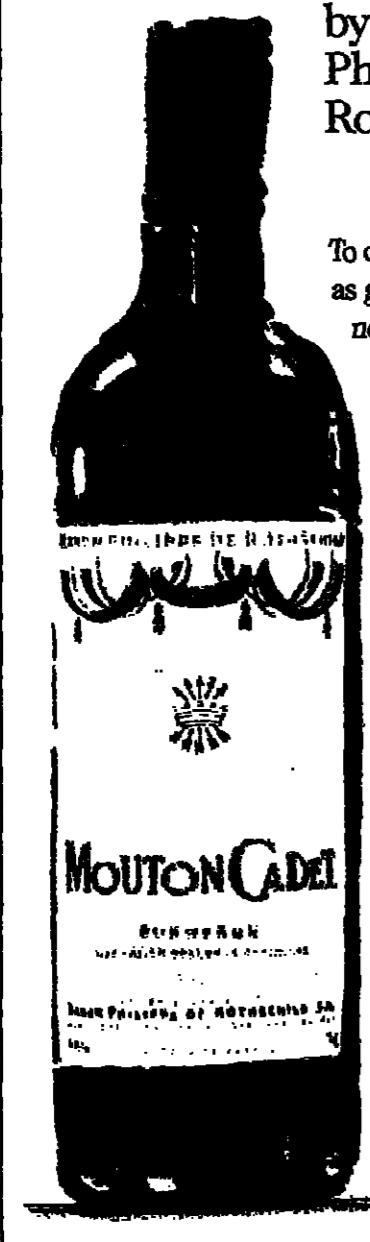
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Gulf War pesticides linked to illness

NEW evidence has emerged that exposure to toxic pesticides in the Gulf War may be directly linked to the illnesses suffered by veterans of the conflict over the last six years.

Fresh research into the health hazards arising from exposure to organophosphate pesticides has revealed that at least 10 per cent of people exposed over a period of time to the pesticides developed a disorder that led to brain damage.

The research, carried out by

Robert Davies, a consultant psychiatrist and a member of the Organophosphate Scientific Forum, will strengthen demands for compensation from the 1,300 Gulf War veterans who have been given official diagnoses of a range of illnesses, including chronic fatigue, skin disorders, muscular pains and shortness of breath.

Although government stud-

ies have so far failed to back the veterans' claims that they are suffering from a unique Gulf War syndrome, one of the official research programmes is currently examining the possible risks from organophosphate poisoning.

Organophosphate pesticide spraying of British tents in Saudi Arabia was carried out on a comprehensive scale, although it took two years for

the Conservative Government to announce this fact in the Commons, after Ministry of Defence officials incorrectly told ministers that the use of such toxic insecticides was only limited.

Dr Davies, consultant at a psychiatric hospital in Taunton, undertook three studies over 18 months, examining about 450 people who claimed to have suffered from organo-

phosphate pesticide exposure, including Gulf War soldiers, farmers and horticultural workers.

In a scientific paper he has sent to the Department of Health and the *Lancet*, Dr

Davies has renamed the syndrome Chronic OP-induced Neuropsychiatric Disorder.

He said he and a colleague, Ghose Ahmed, also a consultant psychiatrist, found the

causal link between organophosphates (OP) and Gulf War syndrome. "Victims all describe the same symptoms, unlike any encountered in general psychiatry before," he said, adding: "It's not depression or anxiety, it's a pattern of brain, nerve and muscle damage which is expressed in mood instability. I cannot yet say if the damage is permanent but my impression is that it is."

Among the symptoms identified by Dr Davies were flu-like illness, personality change, characterised by depression and irritability, impulsive suicidal thinking and language disorder. He said: "The work establishes that these people's symptoms have definitely been caused by OP. There is no doubt, no stronger scientific proof could be needed."

Dr Davies criticised the official study into the health risks of OP, now being carried out by the Institute of Occupational Health in Edinburgh. He said: "It will largely ignore the psychological damage of exposure to the chemical. That study is now very limited. In my view it was deliberately rigged to avoid looking at psychiatric illnesses because of the compensation implications."

BY NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

A BAN on a new generation of sheep dips is being demanded by anglers, landowners and salmon experts amid claims that the chemicals are killing rivers. Tiny amounts of the chemicals introduced as alternatives to dips which were linked with ill health in farmers — can eradicate the insects and invertebrate life in a water course, studies have found.

Critics fear the spread of the dips, called synthetic pyrethroids, threaten the rivers in Scotland, the North West, Wales and the South West. In Cumbria, the worst-hit county, invertebrate life has been killed in up to 100 miles of water, including the River Eden, after a series of pollution incidents in recent months.

James Carr, a vice-chairman of the

Salmon and Trout Association and chairman of the Environment Agency's regional advisory committee, said yesterday that the Eden was one of Britain's finest salmon and trout rivers. It is a proposed Special Area of Conservation under the European Species and Habitats Directive because of its fish life.

The problem with these new products is that they are particularly lethal. A teaspoon can kill hundreds of metres of river by killing aquatic insect life which is the vital component in the food chain for fish and other wildlife," he said. Mr Carr said the impact of the new chemicals was only just emerging.

The products, introduced around 18 months ago, are designed to replace

organophosphate sheep dips which have been blamed for a range of ailments among farmers. The new chemicals are less toxic to man. But critics claim the Government's Veterinary Medicines Directorate, under pressure to find alternatives to organophosphates, have failed to assess the wider environmental impact.

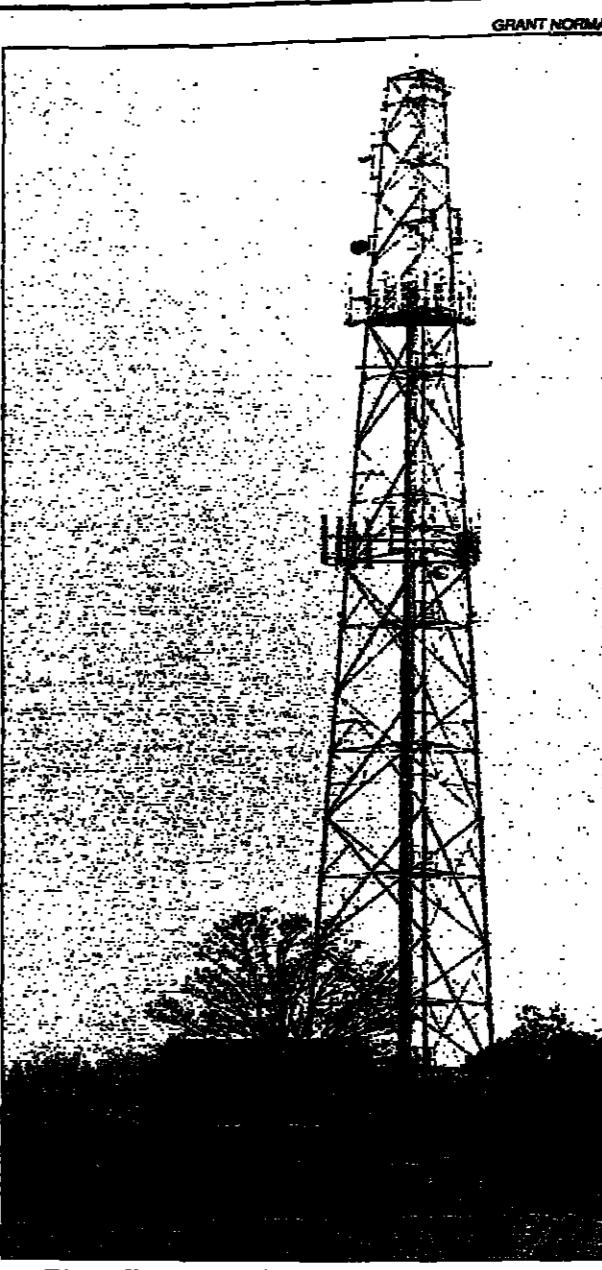
The Environment Agency said yesterday that it was visiting farmers to advise them about the dangers of the new dips to the environment. It will next week be issuing a "strong statement about sheep dips. We are very concerned."

Lord De Ramsey, the agency's chairman, is also expected to raise the matter with Jack Cunningham, the Agriculture Secretary, in two weeks.

River guardians call for ban on sheep dips



De Ramsey: concerns



The radio mast brings in £33,000 a year in rent

Hundreds signal interest in mast

A 160ft radio mast, on the market at £160,000, has attracted more than 300 inquiries from potential buyers. (Dominic Kennedy writes).

Some of those showing an interest are refugees from the stock market who believe the narrow pole at Hill Farm Radio Station, near Fulbourn in Cambridgeshire, has a more stable future than the FTSE index.

The Government requires communications companies to share space on the masts to avoid the countryside turning into a giant pincushion. The Hill Farm pole, annual rent £33,000, is already shared by half a dozen groups, including mobile telephone networks and paging organisations.

Leo Hickish, a partner in Strutt & Parker, the estate agents handling the sale, was surprised that a country pole was now as desirable as a country pile. "This is a novelty," he said. "It is of a par to the sale of big estates, when everything goes ballistic."

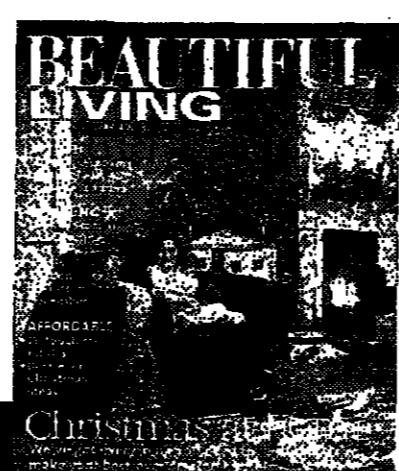
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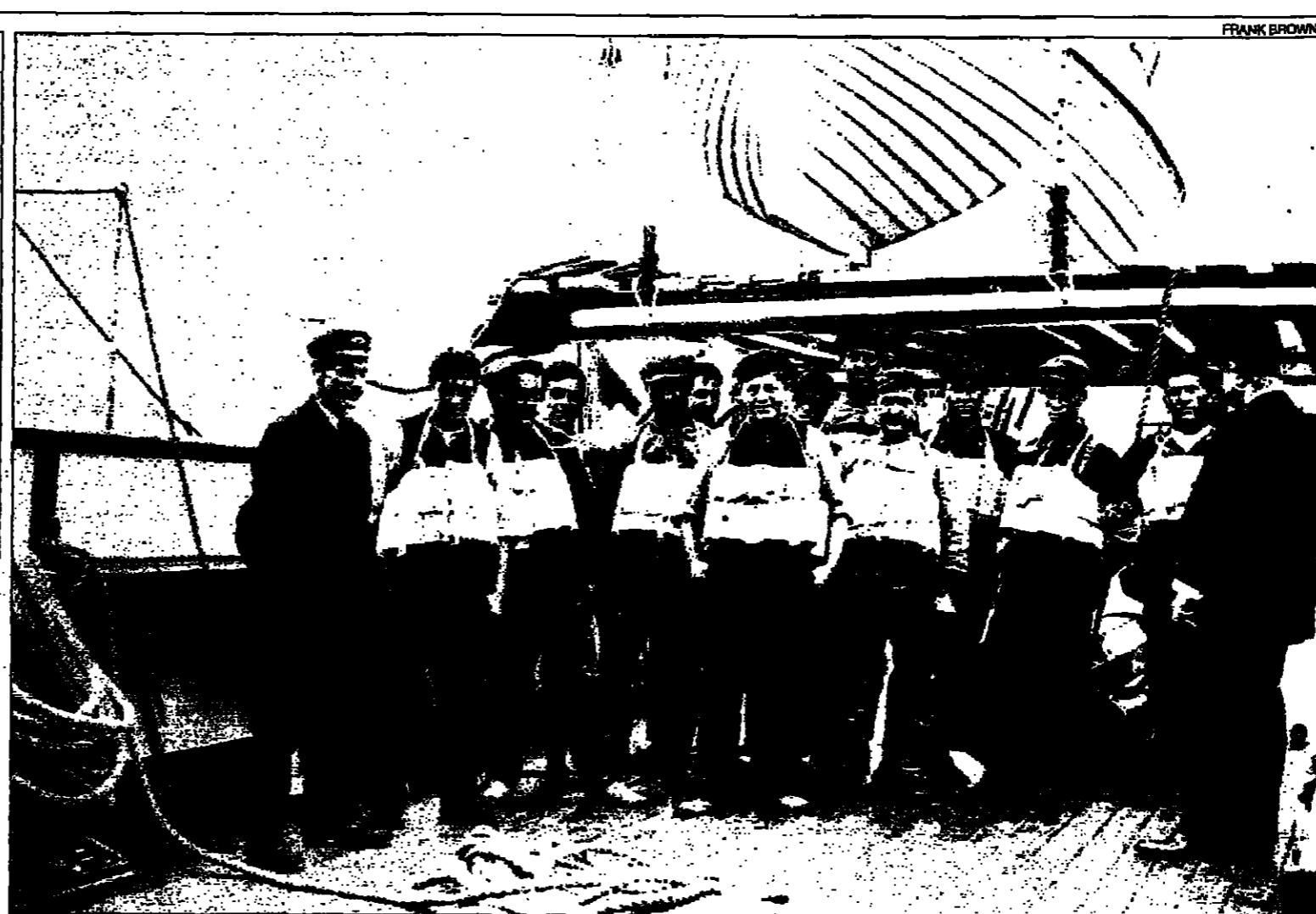
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Children urged to learn the financial facts of life



Last days of the Titanic in the lens of a Jesuit priest

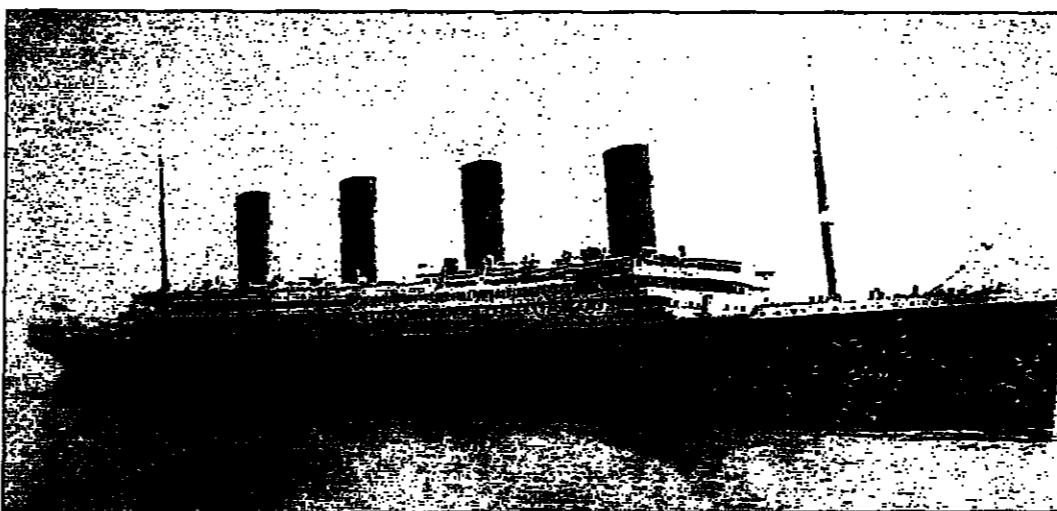
AN IRISH Jesuit priest who photographed the last days of the passengers and crew of the *Titanic* has had his work compiled in a book for the first time.

Father Browne boarded the liner for her maiden voyage at Southampton and sailed to Cherbourg and Queenstown — now Cobh — in Cork, where he disembarked. An avid photographer, he captured the liner's first days at sea in pictures. Most of his subjects drowned after the ship, en route to New York, hit an iceberg off Cape Race in the Atlantic on April 15, 1912. More than 1500 people perished.

After the tragedy, the priest compiled an album of his photographs and memorabilia from the trip, bound it in leather and entrusted it to his friends in the Jesuit Order in Dublin. Estimated to be worth £2 million, the album has now been produced as a book, *Father Browne's Titanic Album*.

There are more than 30 black and white pictures taken on the ship, some grainy and scratched, that show its

Audrey Magee on a book of photographs taken on the fatal voyage by Father Frank Browne



Jack Phillips, the wireless operator on the left, was acclaimed as a hero for sticking to his post when the ship sank after leaving Queenstown

working and leisure life. Others depict the journey on the boat train from London to Southampton and the disembarkation at Cork.

The priest handwrote the captions: "The *Titanic's* first sunrise"; "The children's playground, taken about mid-

day on the saloon deck"; "The last glimpse of Capt Smith"; and "Mr Parr, electrician, and Mr McGurk, gymnas, both lost".

Father Browne's photographs were widely used in newspapers of the time, and subsequently on anniversary

ries, and have been reprinted in several books about the liner. This is the first time, however, that they have been collected in a single published volume.

Robert Ballard, leader of the 1985 American expedition that found the *Titanic* 2½

miles below the surface, in wrote the book's foreword. He describes Father Browne's pictures as "pivotal reminders" of the vessel he saw under the Atlantic.

Father Browne, a contemporary of James Joyce who referred to him as "Mr

He was chaplain to the

Browne, the Jesuit" in *Finnegan's Wake*, developed a passion for photography after he was given a camera in 1897. He travelled widely, taking pictures in France, Italy, Britain, Ireland, Australia and South Africa.

He was chaplain to the

"Ten years ago I would have said that the most newsworthy fact about Father Browne was that he sailed on the *Titanic*," Father O'Donnell said. "That is no longer the case. The most interesting fact now is that he is being recognised as one of the world's greatest photographers of all time."

The children's cartoon *Reboot* was condemned for violence by the Independent Television Commission after an episode featured a zombie and a villain wielding a chainsaw.

It was a breach of the official programme code to show the episode on ITV as early as 4.40pm, the commission said, upholding complaints from 19 viewers that the violence in the episode *To Mend and Defend* was unacceptable and that the characters, from feature films and computer games, were inappropriate.

Helicopter crash

A pilot and four male passengers were injured when a helicopter crashed into a field in Danbury, Essex. One passenger suffered serious head injuries, the others whiplash injuries. They had taken the trip to celebrate a birthday.

Major note

John Major, the former Prime Minister, helped to launch *The Greatest British Album Of The Century — Britannia*, as a tribute to the Royal Yacht. Each copy sold will bring a donation to King George's Fund for Sailors.

Late opening

Seventeen million people in Britain shop at night, according to a survey carried out by Shell UK, which has 850 24-hour Select shops linked to its garages. The survey also found that five million people like to shop after 10pm.

999 victim

A pensioner died after he was struck by a police car which was answering a 999 call. James Morris, 68, was crossing a road in North Wingfield, Derbyshire. Police said that the car's siren and emergency lights were in use.

Coastguard cuts

The Government is to announce the closure of up to six coastguard stations today. The move has been caused by funding difficulties in the Coastguard Agency, which merges with the Marine Safety Agency next April.

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WINNER BOOTS FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT

BUDS BUNNY JORDAN

Portillo ready for a comeback in the Commons

By POLLY NEWTON, POLITICAL REPORTER

MICHAEL PORTILLO, who lost his parliamentary seat in one of the biggest surprises of the general election, has confirmed that he wants to return to the House of Commons. The former Defence Secretary said that he would seek re-election "partly because I am better at politics than I am at anything else."

In a clear signal that he will try to re-enter the Commons before the next election, he said: "It's also because, if we are not going to be bossed around by our new Government, we have to make ourselves heard in Parliament."

Mr Portillo's defeat in his North London constituency of Enfield Southgate on May 1 ended any immediate prospect of him succeeding John Major as Conservative leader. However, his decision to make clear that he sees his future in politics will provoke fresh speculation about his ambitions.

After a high-profile speech at the Tory conference, he insisted that he was not making any kind of long-term bid to lead the party. However, he would almost certainly command significant support from the Right of the party in any future contest for the leadership.

Mr Portillo, 44, writing yesterday in the *Express on Sunday*, said that in many ways he had enjoyed life since May 1. The "sabbatical" had given him time to reflect on why the Conservatives lost so badly.

"What I can see clearly is

how totally our image went wrong," he said. "A lot of people came to hate the Tories; you cannot win if people think you are mean-spirited. We are not."

He said that politicians should be aware of how they were perceived. "People fol-

Portillo called for greater tolerance from the Conservatives. "I don't want to alienate anybody by being over-judgmental about their private life," he said.

The job of politicians is not to pry behind your front door, but rather to prevent people from doing things that harm others."

He said that the Conservatives had seemed to alienate whole groups in society. "I hope teachers will come back to us because we value them, and put standards in education at the top of our agenda. I trust we will attract back the young because we aim to create for them the ladder of opportunity which enables people to achieve their hopes."

Mr Portillo predicted that William Hague's style would find favour with voters. "We need again to speak to people in a language they understand and boil things down to clear statements. William Hague will be good at that."

He said Mr Hague was being "straight" about the consequences of a European single currency — "something else I like about him".

Mr Portillo said that Labour claimed to reflect the "well, fine, but the people I talk to want to hear their point of view represented in Parliament, otherwise it's not doing its job."

"That's why I stick my neck out in saying that I would like to be re-elected; to return to Parliament to help express a broad body of opinion."

If we are not going to be bossed around by Labour, then we have to be heard

Michael Portillo

lowed Mrs Thatcher because she was tough and knew where she was leading. But, over time, her enemies turned her qualities against her; made her steely resolve seem like a heart of granite."

Echoing the speech he made during the Conservative conference in Blackpool, Mr

Portillo said that Labour claimed to reflect the "well, fine, but the people I talk to want to hear their point of view represented in Parliament, otherwise it's not doing its job."

"That's why I stick my neck out in saying that I would like to be re-elected; to return to Parliament to help express a broad body of opinion."



Harriet Harman and Frank Field are at odds over reforms, but Professor Mead says only toughness works

Expert says Harman's soft line for jobless mothers will never succeed

By NICHOLAS WOOD

HARRIET HARMAN'S softly approach to getting single mothers back to work is condemned as unworkable today by one of America's leading welfare experts.

The Social Security Secretary has pinned her hopes on a £200 million programme in which an army of 1,000 personal advisers will attempt to persuade lone parents to switch from welfare to work. It is being piloted in eight parts of the country and is due to go national from October next year.

But in a new report, Lawrence Mead, Professor of Politics at New York University, says that the US exper-

ience demonstrates that tougher measures are needed. "The way forward is no longer liberation but obligation," Professor Mead concludes, after reviewing the growing trend for American states to cut off benefits if claimants refuse to take a job.

In the report, Professor Mead says the main task of social policy should not be to reform society but to restore the authority of parents and teachers.

"The best single thing it can do is to restore order in the inner city. Above all, it can require that poor parents work, because employment failures are the greatest cause of family failures."

Reviewing America's welfare to

work projects, Professor Mead says that the best results in terms of alleviating poverty have been achieved by those that penalise people who will not take a job.

"It has become clear that high work programmes must be highly prescriptive and authoritative. One clear finding is that high participation in programmes is essential to show results."

Professor Mead says that voluntary schemes of the kind advocated by Ms Harman had been disappointing because only those likely to land a job anyway took part.

Last month, Ms Harman claimed her "New Deal" for lone parents was producing

"very encouraging" results with one in four of those committed to the scheme finding work. Closer analysis suggested the true success rate was one in 20.

Frank Field, the Minister for Welfare Reform, has been at odds with Ms Harman over his enthusiasm for radical change. Mr Field backs compulsion in some areas — such as the Government's plans for getting the under-25s off the dole — but endorses a voluntary approach for lone mothers.

"I am convinced that lone parents are a vast untapped resource, and that simply offering a helping hand should result in an immediate response."

Channel Tunnel safety still in doubt

By ROBIN YOUNG

SAFETY procedures for trains and passengers using the Channel Tunnel are still causing concern, a year after a fire on board a freight train.

The Consumers' Association says it is worried about the use of open-sided freight carriages, evacuation procedures and the fact that passengers are kept with their cars on shuttle trains.

An official report into the fire by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority made 36 safety recommendations after saying the fire had exposed "fundamental weaknesses" in safety systems. It said that inadequate training of Eurotunnel staff led to "errors and delays" in dealing with the blaze.

Eurotunnel, the tunnel operator, said yesterday that most of the recommendations had been implemented and those not yet adopted involved "long-term infrastructure investment". A Eurotunnel spokeswoman said: "We are happy with our evacuation tests and convinced that tourist shuttle passengers staying with their vehicles is the best procedure. We have ordered more open-sided freight shuttles, but they have been modified and prototypes are now being tested."

The Consumers' Association says it remains unsatisfied that open-sided carriages used for freight trains are safe in the case of a fire. It doubts the realism of Eurotunnel's evacuation tests, and believes that keeping cars, fuel and people enclosed together in tourist shuttle wagons increases the risk of fire and the threat of casualties.

Government is urged to scrap the Corporation of London

By VALERIE ELLIOTT
WHITEHALL EDITOR

THE Corporation of London should be abolished and its private income used to fund the proposed London authority and elected mayor, a pamphlet published today argues. Guildhall would become the base for the authority, with the mayor installed in Mansion House.

The proposal, published by the

Fabian Society, the pro-Labour think-tank, comes from Malcolm Matson, a City entrepreneur whose attempt to join the Court of Aldermen was blocked in 1994. Mr Matson challenged the body's arcane rules in the High Court, where he lost. But the Court of Appeal ruled that the aldermen had to tell Mr Matson why he was not a suitable candidate.

Mr Matson argues: "The Gov-

ernment's plans are doomed to fail unless it is prepared to pursue a sweeping reform of a Corporation of London, the undemocratic, unaccountable and largely self-perpetuating body at London's historic and geographic heart.

Constitutional reform of the City is a critical test of the new Government's radical credentials." He believes that the existence of two mayors in London — the City's Lord Mayor and the

elected office being proposed by the Government — would be absurd and confusing.

Among Mr Matson's proposals are the privatisation of the City's four markets to provide a windfall for the Treasury. He also calls for the merger of the City of London Police with the Metropolitan Police, but accepts the need for a specialist force to police the financial and information sectors of

global markets. The City's millions in revenue from capital assets would provide the new London authority with an independent financial base and bring greater accountability to the management and use of the cash, he argues.

He questions the corporate vote planned by the corporation to give companies a say in the running of the Square Mile.

Parliament and the nation have

been dazzled by the corporation's ceremonial and charitable record, he suggests. "Few have seen fit to look under the gold coach or the Lord Mayor's ermine to see that this local authority has failed to fulfil the statutory obligation placed on it by Edward III to chart a course with good faith and reason," which is "profitable to the people".

The Corporation of London last night dismissed Mr Matson's ideas as "half-baked and unworkable" and claimed his pamphlet gave a "superficial, naive, half-picture of the real City of London". Franchise reforms would, a spokesman said, remove all anomalies and make the corporation representative of the business community.

□ *The Last Rotten Borough*, The Fabian Society (11 Dartmouth St, London SW1; £10)

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Beach battle puts a town at bay

Richard Duce
on a challenge to
businessman who
hopes an ancient
ownership right
will be his oyster

AS A fresh November wind gusts off the North Sea towards one of Britain's best-known coastal restaurants, its owner is at the centre of a rising legal storm over his claim to his own stretch of the coast.

Barry Green, 62, says he has historic legal rights to register the 1½ miles of shingle beach as his property, running to the left and right of the Egon Ronay-listed Royal Native Oyster Stores at Whitstable, Kent. He has run into vociferous opposition from councillors who have engaged lawyers to try to disprove the claim.

Mr Green already owns the only cinema in Whitstable and is opening a new hotel. He runs holiday lets in converted fishermen's huts, holds the majority stake in the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company and still operates his original core business of selling ceramic tiles.

The battle for the beach has led to allegations that he will deprive locals of access to a natural amenity and will put up barbed wire to keep them away. An emergency debate has already been held by Canterbury City Council. Yesterday Mr Green was happy to give assurances that he had no plans to shut off the beach, saying that any development would be limited to the construction of ramps for the revival of oyster beds. His ownership claim stretches 200 metres out into the bay.

Geoffrey Pike, a local historian, says: "There is not the slightest doubt that Mr Green owns the beach, but questions do arise for townsfolk on how it will affect their rights of access to the beach."

"Access has been a traditional part of Whitstable life, and it also raises concern about whether this will give Mr Green the right to develop on the beach."

Mr Green insists that laying right to title of the Manor and



Julia Seath, who wants a written assurance that residents will have access to the beach in perpetuity. She said: "It has stirred up bad feeling."

Foreshore of Whitstable with the Land Registry is merely a formality to clear up future ownership. It encompasses offshore oyster beds.

The Romans first brought oyster farming to Whitstable, and the rights to fish off the town rested with the Lord of the Manor until the late 18th century.

According to Mr Pike, it was Lord Bolingbroke who fell on hard times in 1793 and sold the oyster grounds and beach to the highwater mark to the Free Fishers and Dredgers of Whitstable, who eventually formed the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Company.

In 1869 the company bought

buildings, now the restaurant, were derelict when Mr Green bought a 75 per cent stake 23 years ago. The restaurant business alone now has an annual turnover close to £1 million.

Mr Green and his son, Richard, 32, a director of the company, say their ambition is to reintroduce oysters to their beds. At present, they buy them from a neighbouring firm.

"Although the beach is probably worth a small fortune and one of very few in private hands, we would never consider selling the beach," Mr Green said. "We are trying to keep things as they always were. There has been oyster farming here for thousands of years. The company is tied in with the beach. We are registering the land because of the beds. We need control over both."

"I don't feel we have any-
thing to fight. We have put our case to the Land Registry, and so far there are no other valid claims."

"It is a joke to suggest that I am going to bring in razorwire to keep people out. I can give an assurance that enjoyment of the beach will never be restricted."

Concern about the future of the beach for the 30,000 population of Whitstable is led by a Labour councillor, Julia Seath, who tabled an emergency council motion and is seeking a written assurance that access rights will be granted in perpetuity.

She said: "I am concerned about the implications of this for the townspersons. I am looking for an assurance that, at some future point in time, access will not be denied or charging policies introduced."

He now lets them to holidaymakers at £75 a night. Change-of-use planning permission has still to be granted. They were featured earlier this week on the BBC *Holiday* programme.

stirred up a lot of bad feeling in the town. It is a small place where people often fall out with each other, but when threatened by one individual they will stand together."

Janet Franklin, senior solicitor with Canterbury City Council, said: "We are trying to protect the rights of the public. It is too early to say if Mr Green has a legitimate claim, but we have a duty to object where the public rights are of overriding interest."

Two years ago, Mr Green received £12,000 grant aid towards the £100,000 conversion costs of the fishermen's huts, but failed to let them to local artisans as originally intended.

He now lets them to holidaymakers at £75 a night. Change-of-use planning permission has still to be granted.

They were featured earlier this week on the BBC *Holiday* programme.

Green: says he would never sell the beach



Green: says he would never sell the beach

Railtrack will let hire bikes take the strain

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

RAIL managers are preparing to lure commuters away from their cars with rented bicycles. Railtrack directors are anxious to seize on the increasing enthusiasm for cycling by setting up bicycle hire shops at the main railway stations.

The company has submitted plans to John Prescott, the Deputy Prime Minister, outlining proposals to provide bicycles at stations in London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Glasgow and Birmingham.

The move would enable commuters to hire a bicycle for the day and return it in the evening. The scheme would follow the example of countries such as The Netherlands, Germany and Denmark, where bicycle hire has become a routine part of city transport. In Germany, thousands of cyclists pick up a bicycle at one station and drop it off at another.

In Copenhagen, cyclists can pick up a bicycle from one of several racks and return it to another elsewhere in the city. Mr Prescott has asked transport organisations to put forward plans to help to curb congestion before the Government's transport White Paper is published in the spring. Railtrack, which owns and runs signalling and track across the country, states in its submission to the Government that it is "working to develop an innovative scheme for the provision of cycles at major stations".

If the scheme proves successful, cycling pressure groups hope similar plans will be introduced at stations serving coastal towns and beauty spots. Hire schemes have been set up in Bath and Moreton-in-Marsh, in the Cotswolds, but have not been backed by rail companies.

The move towards bicycle hire follows a study prepared for Railtrack by Biketel, an organisation aiming to promote better rail facilities to

cyclists. Peter Gaze, project manager of Biketel, said: "We are a long way behind other countries. There are signs that we have got cycling into the institutional process. But it is a long way from where we were five years ago and we know that train operators are keen to have hire facilities, if only to avoid bicycles on trains."

Mr Gaze said that it was unlikely that a retail outlet could survive on bicycle hire alone, but might include sales of cycling accessories as well as offering servicing for commuters' bicycles. Some rail companies, led by Anglia Railways and Great Western, have set up bicycle racks on trains but most of the 25 train operators make no provision for cyclists.

A Railtrack spokeswoman said that the company would examine the options in detail in the new year before deciding which stations would lead the hire project. "We want to show that we will support the Government in its plans to have an integrated transport system and to reduce congestion in city centres."

Cycling groups claim that it is difficult to take bicycles on trains because most operators have abandoned guard's vans. They have also complained to Railtrack about poor storage facilities at some mainline stations and the lack of adequate signs for racks.

Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister, who has been pressing local authorities to encourage more use of bicycles, has met cycling organisations to discuss ways of capitalising on the increasing interest in cycling. Sales of new bicycles have outstripped those of new cars for the past nine years, but cycling campaigners say that many people are put off by the difficulties of bringing their bicycles into town.

Museum reunites Handel with his librettist

BY DALYA ALBERG
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

A MUSEUM being founded in memory of the composer George Frideric Handel has acquired an important portrait of the man who wrote the libretto to *Messiah*.

Thomas Hudson's imposing portrayal of Charles Jennens (1700-73) will be dis-

played, alongside an extraordinary collection of Handel manuscripts and memorabilia that was acquired for the nation in September, at the house in Brook Street, West London, where Handel lived for 36 years until his death in 1759.

It was bought this week at Sotheby's. Half the £13,800 price was raised from private

donations; the rest came from the National Art Collections Fund, which, with 80,000 members, is Britain's largest art charity.

Stanley Sadie, president of the Handel House Trust, described Jennens as the most important of Handel's artistic collaborators. "It was Jennens who conceived the idea of an oratorio on the theme of the

Messiah and planned the libretto, providing what a contemporary described as the most elevated, majestic, and moving Words."

Apart from *Messiah* of 1741, Jennens also wrote, among others, librettos to Handel's oratorios *Saul* and *Belshazzar*. He became so renowned for his extravagant lifestyle that he was nicknamed

Solymann the Magnificent. Despite their friendship, however, Jennens displayed a certain arrogance. Dr Sadie noted how he felt "Handel's music failed to do justice to his words, saying 'I shall put no more Sacred Words into his hands, to be thus abus'd', although he admitted that 'Tis after all, in the main, a fine Composition'."



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Saddam given warning over Scud offensive

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein's ambition to have missiles tipped with nuclear, chemical or biological warheads poses "a great danger to the world", Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said yesterday.

Before leaving London for Washington, he refused to say what action he might take if Saddam fired Scud ballistic missiles at Israel. "I'd rather not speculate on possibilities," he said in an interview on BBC's *Breakfast with Frost*. However, Israeli officials have made clear that if Saddam fired missiles with chemical or biological warheads at cities in Israel, there would be no hesitation in responding from

its stock of weapons of mass destruction.

During the Gulf War, Israel agreed to hold back from retaliatory strikes after Scuds were fired on Tel Aviv, because of the importance of maintaining the Arab coalition against Iraq. The Iraqi leader had hoped to provoke Israel into responding, and thus destroy the Arab alliance built up by the United States.

An Israeli official said yesterday: "Today that Arab alliance against Saddam doesn't exist, so the same argument no longer applies." Israel has an awesome inventory of weapons.

Last week, Israeli officials were reported to have given a warning that Israel would respond to an Iraqi chemical or biological attack with a neutron bomb, the enhanced-radiation weapon that some countries developed in the 1970s. A tactical weapon which produces a huge wave of neutron and gamma radiation but a reduced blast effect, it can be carried in a Lance missile system or delivered by howitzer or aircraft. Although this was seen as part of the rhetoric to deter Saddam, it is presumed Israel has a number of neutron bombs.

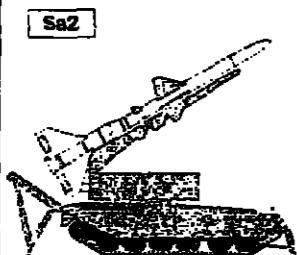
It is also suspected of having developed up to 100 nuclear warheads, and has the delivery systems for launching a nuclear attack. The Jericho 1 single-warhead ballistic missile, with a range of more than 300 miles, and the Jericho 2, with a range of more than 900 miles, are both capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The Israeli Air Force's F4 Phantom is nuclear-capable, and its F15s and F16s are also likely to be capable of carrying nuclear bombs. Israel, helped by the US, have been developing the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system, but it is not yet operational. A number of its flight tests have failed, although the system is expected to be in service within the next few years.

The U2s on patrol over Iraq are protected at a lower altitude by support aircraft including electronic counter-measure planes which would be able to jam the Sa2's radio guidance system.

It was fired by the Soviet Union when it brought down the U2 flown by the US Air Force pilot Gary Powers in 1960. Two Sa2s were fired at

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Iraq puts its faith in veteran missile

THE only weapon in Iraq's armoury capable of hitting an American U2 spy plane is the Russian-made Sa2 Guideline surface-to-air missile, according to US Defence Department officials (Michael Evans writes). First put into production in about 1956 and operational with Soviet armed forces in 1958, it has been one of the most widely used missile systems in the world. The Russians have sold it to more than 20 countries.

It was fired by the Soviet Union when it brought down the U2 flown by the US Air Force pilot Gary Powers in 1960. Two Sa2s were fired at

the aircraft as it flew over Soviet territory. One hit the aircraft and the other exploded in it.

The Sa2 was then new and it has since been modified and improved. However, it is obsolescent and modern aircraft with electronic counter-measure systems should have little difficulty avoiding it. The Sa2 has been described as "a flying telegraph pole".

The U2s on patrol over Iraq are protected at a lower altitude by support aircraft including electronic counter-measure planes which would be able to jam the Sa2's radio guidance system.

The Sa2 is fitted with a gas mask at a distribution centre in Jerusalem as the nation prepares for possible attack from Iraq.

MPs have expressed fears that one in ten of the population will be without adequate protection if Iraq does launch a chemical attack, while reports claim that as many as 6,000 people a day are visiting gas mask distribution points (Ross Durn

writes from Jerusalem). David Zucker, chairman of an Israeli parliamentary sub-committee on security affairs, said a lack of money meant that about 10 per cent of the population would be without adequate gas masks. Israeli military officials estimated that some 400,000 people had faulty gas masks that

needed to be replaced. Mr Zucker said that a further £14 million was required to meet the shortfall in funding. Otherwise, until the end of 1998, there would be a lack of kits — specially designed for infants and men with beards. He said the shortage was "due to a lack of political foresight and the non-allocation of adequate sums of money".

During the Gulf War, more than 40 Iraqi Scud missiles were launched at Israel. Only one man died, of a heart attack, but there was extensive property damage as Israel bowed to American pressure not to retaliate. Israelis lived for weeks in sealed areas, wearing gas masks, only to discover that their equipment then was also defective.

Israelis prepare for attack

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

COALITION

AMERICAN attempts to rally support for possible military strikes against Iraq suffered a significant setback yesterday when Kuwait declared it would oppose the use of force.

The tiny oil-rich emirate has

been the staunchest supporter of American policy on Iraq since the Gulf War and still relies on US muscle for its survival. Its call for moderation came as Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, began consultations with Washington's allies in the Gulf and Iraq announced its own diplomatic offensive to win Arab support.

"Any military attack would

harm the Iraqi people and neighbours," Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister, said after meeting President Mubarak of Egypt in Cairo. The Kuwaiti Cabinet also issued a statement urging a diplomatic solution, echoing calls from Egypt, Syria, Bahrain and other key Arab components of the Gulf War alliance.

It is also suspected of having developed up to 100 nuclear warheads, and has the delivery systems for launching a nuclear attack. The Jericho 1 single-warhead ballistic missile, with a range of more than 300 miles, and the Jericho 2, with a range of more than 900 miles, are both capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

The Israeli Air Force's F4 Phantom is nuclear-capable, and its F15s and F16s are also likely to be capable of carrying nuclear bombs. Israel, helped by the US, have been developing the Arrow anti-ballistic missile system, but it is not yet operational. A number of its flight tests have failed, although the system is expected to be in service within the next few years.

It repeated threats to shoot down American U2 spy planes, and for the first time raised the spectre of a terrorist backlash against British and US interests in the Middle East.

An editorial in Saturday's *Babel*, an influential newspaper owned by Saddam's eldest son, Uday, said: "American and British interests, embassies and naval ships in the Arab region should be the targets of military operations and commando attacks by Arab political forces."

However, there was also strong criticism of Iraq for triggering the crisis over weapons inspections. "We discussed Iraqi and American threats, and not threats from one side," said Sheikh al-Sabah, who ruled out reconcili

ation with Baghdad while President Saddam Hussein was in power.

A Gulf diplomat said: "The Kuwaitis are still terrified of Saddam and don't want to back military action if it doesn't get rid of him. After all, they have to live next to Iraq. If the Americans can convince Kuwait they have a real strategy to topple Saddam, I think they'd give Washington the support it wants."

Iraq accused the United States of pretending to give diplomacy a chance while it used the time to complete military preparations. "We discussed Iraqi and American threats, and not threats from one side," said Sheikh al-Sabah, who ruled out reconcili

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Stand-off provoked 'to protect germ-war stockpile'

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON
AND JAMES BONE
IN NEW YORK

THE showdown with President Saddam Hussein was provoked when it dawned on the Iraqi leader that he could no longer hoodwink United Nations weapons inspectors over his secret stockpiles of germ warfare agents.

American and UN officials said yesterday that the inspectors had been closing in on sites where they expected to uncover the heart of Saddam's biological weapons programme, including evidence of refrigerated lorries used to move supplies of the lethal anthrax bacteria, and details of tests on live animals.

Some inspectors suspect that Iraq may even have conducted tests on prisoners captured during the Iran-Iraq war and on Kurdish dissidents. Rumours about human guinea-pigs have never been confirmed, but two years ago inspectors did obtain videotapes of the death throes of dogs, monkeys and other animals infected with anthrax spores and botulism toxins.

As the inspectors tightened their noose, they were also threatening to expose the role of Saddam's Special Republican Guards in controlling the sites, logistics and testing of biological warfare research under the supervision of his son, Qusay.

The current crisis began two days after a stern letter to the Iraqi Government on October 27 by Richard Butler, head of the UN inspection teams. It came after three rebuffs during September and October of inspectors trying to gain access to premises controlled by the Republican Guards.

WEAPONS

and to a building known as the chemical defence headquarters. Mr Butler's letter proposed a Baghdad meeting on November 9 and 10 at which he would be accompanied by, among others, his chief biological weapons investigator, Dick Spertzel, a retired US military officer and acknowledged expert on germ warfare.

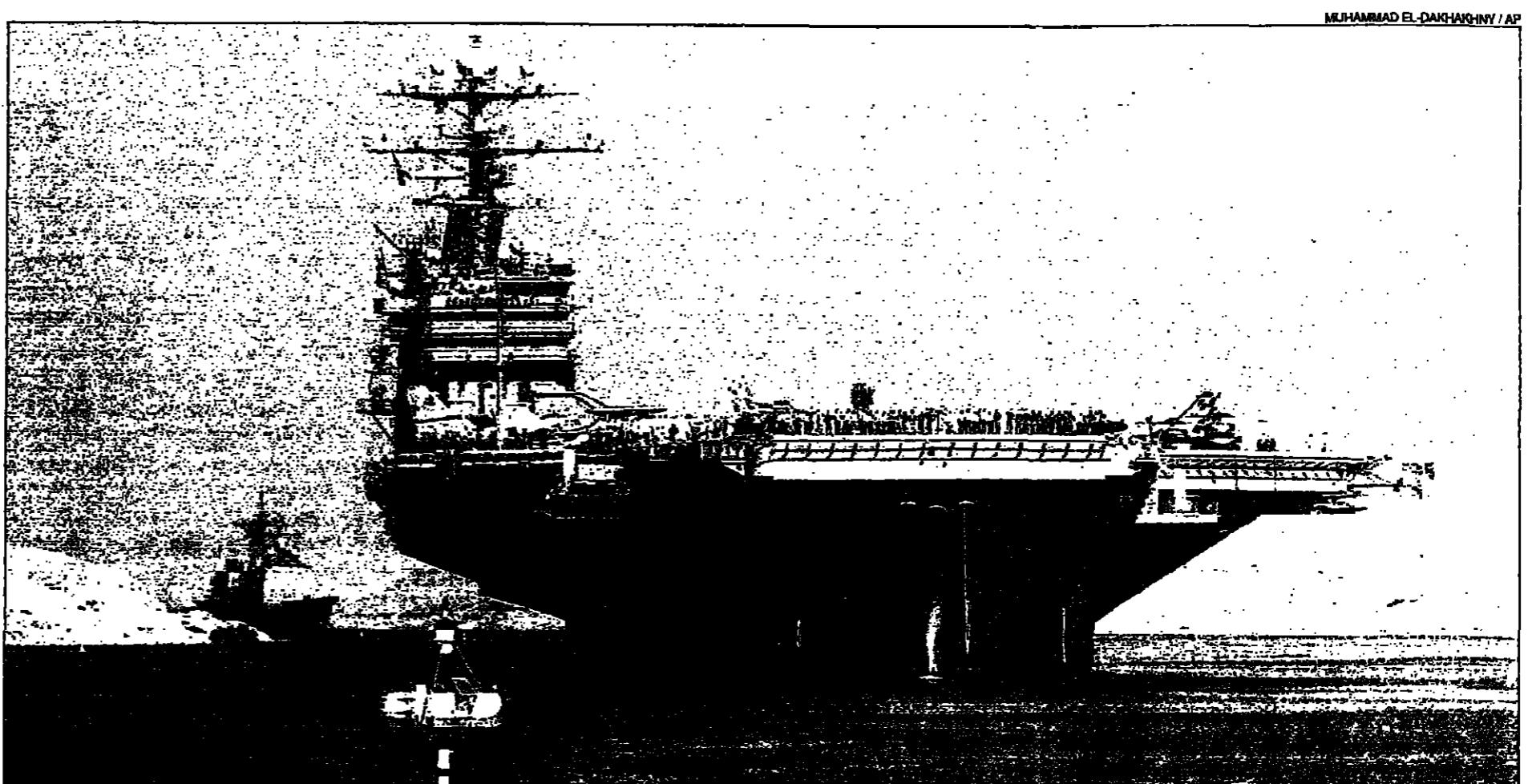
The meeting, Mr Butler wrote, should focus on how Iraq intended to proceed on providing information about biological weapons. He also wanted an understanding that inspectors could visit sensitive sites, and assurances on how they would be treated there.

These demands apparently confirmed for Saddam's inner circle that their claim to have made a "full, final and complete declaration" about biological weapons had been rejected as preposterous.

In addition to making them come clean about their prized biological arsenal, Mr Butler wanted more information on Iraq's missile warheads and its stocks of two chemical warfare agents — VX nerve gas and mustard gas.

Iraq is keeping its germ-warfare data secret after losing the bulk of its chemical weapons and nuclear programmes to the inspectors.

■ Moscow intervenes: Russia is trying to rein in the Special Commission responsible for disarming Iraq by transforming its advisory board of technical experts into a political oversight body. At Russia's request, the UN Security Council has recommended that Uniscom reconvene a meeting of its 21 commissioners to discuss the Iraqi confrontation.



The aircraft carrier USS George Washington, above, in the Suez Canal en route to the Gulf yesterday. The USS Annapolis nuclear submarine, below, is in her escort



Air power stepped up at Incirlik

Incirlik Air Base: Washington is boosting its fighting presence here in southern Turkey, one of Nato's most sophisticated air bases, which was extensively used for bombing sorties during the Gulf War (Andrew Finkel writes).

But Turkey denied that it had given permission for the base to be used for fresh offensive action. Ismet Sezgin, the Turkish Defence Minister, said yesterday that permission would need the consent of the Turkish parliament. He also

TURKEY

denied that F117 Stealth bombers had been sent to Incirlik.

The base is currently used to patrol the northern Iraq no-fly zone, and any increase in the intensity of operations must raise the possibility of a direct confrontation with Iraqi fighters violating the zone, which they increasingly do.

Iraqis in the zone normally turn tail as soon as they are "lit" by radar beams. "If they are looking for a confrontation now, that's what they'll get," a US Embassy spokesman said.

Clinton cites Tokyo attack as warning

FROM IAN BRODIE
IN WASHINGTON

GAS FEARS

dent Yeltsin and President Chirac of France. Britain has joined America in gearing up for possible military action, and Mr Clinton and the Prime Minister discussed diplomatic measures and the need to maintain unity in the UN Security Council.

Russia has agreed to use its special relationship with Iraq to try to find a peaceful solution. The Americans have made a similar appeal to the French, but whether Paris agreed is "less clear," said an official with Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, who is in the Middle East. Yesterday she added extra stops to her schedule — Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. She was seeking to stiffen resolve and remind them of America's need to use bases in their countries should there be armed conflict.

The Saudis are likely to collaborate if they are convinced that Saddam is determined to rebuild and expand his capacity to manufacture weapons of terror. Bahrain has a large US naval air station and is not expected to raise objections should diplomatic efforts fail.

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FROM JAMES PRINGLE
IN BEIJING

CHINA'S leading pro-democracy activist, Wei Jingheng, a 47-year-old electrician twice nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, was released from jail at the weekend and flown yesterday to the United States in what diplomats saw as a surprise concession to American pressure on Beijing's human rights record.

That pressure came most notably during the recent visit of President Jiang Zemin to the US, where he held talks with President Clinton. The two leaders disagreed publicly on human rights, most significantly on the violent suppression and massacre of pro-democracy protesters in Tiananmen Square in June 1989. Xinhua,

China's official news agency, said that Mr Wei had been released on "medical parole".

Mr Wei had always said that he would not seek exile but he was serving a 14-year sentence during which he had allegedly suffered harassment, including beatings from criminal cellmates. Human rights sources claimed that the ill-treatment had been on the orders of senior prison officials. Family members said that his decision to go indicated the parlous state of his health. On his arrival in Detroit yesterday he was taken directly to hospital.

After a meeting yesterday with some of his family, including a brother, at Beijing's international airport, where there was high security, Mr Wei boarded a Northwest

Airlines flight for Detroit. He was accompanied by a US diplomat and a Chinese judicial official. His sister, who lives in Boston, said she would join him to help to "look after him".

His brother, Wei Xiaozao, told reporters later: "My brother is still in high spirits. He hopes to come back one day to China. He is not the kind of person to change his ideals."

Diplomats said the release of Mr Wei Jingheng, who has been suffering from heart trouble and high blood pressure, and has lost most of his teeth, was "a positive but not conclusive sign of willingness of Beijing to change".

Foreign diplomats said that Mr Wei might become irrelevant in exile. Some even say that this may be what the US Government, and certainly

Beijing, want. Others hope that China will soon release other jailed pro-democracy activists such as Wang Dan, one of the chief student leaders during the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations. His parents say that he also needs medical treatment.

Mr Wei first aroused the ire of the authorities in the late 1970s when he called on Deng Xiaoping, the late reforming leader, to bring in the "fifth modernisation" — democracy — to complement free-market reforms in the economy.

He was one of the most prominent activists during the pro-democracy wall campaign of the 1970s, publicly writing posters critical of the Chinese leadership. He had served one 14-year jail term and was into his second, imposed essentially for a

meeting with a senior human rights official of the US Administration in 1994, although Beijing said the penalty was for trying to overthrow the Government.

American officials, who clearly hope Mr Wei's release will help to relax Sino-American tensions, said that in exile Mr Wei could be much less of a force for change in China than he was in a labour camp. One foreign envoy suggested: "Pretty soon, he may cease to be the flavour of the month."

China has observed that other dissidents, once overseas, become less and less relevant. Because they get no publicity in the Chinese press — they are treated as non-persons — few Chinese know much about them or what they stand for.

Former pop star beats the drum for Islam

FROM TOM WALKER
IN SARAJEVO

THE man looking every inch a Muslim cleric returned to centre stage, pulled by the frantic crowd's exhortations. "Who is the greatest?" he asked them. "Allah is the greatest," the thousands cried.

After an absence of 18 years, Yusuf Islam, formerly the pop star known as Cat Stevens, was back in the public gaze. On Saturday night in Sarajevo's Skendaria centre, the one-time hippy whose plaintive melodies were a leitmotif of the early 1970s, showed Bosnia his new self.

With nothing more than five dervishes banging drums for accompaniment, he performed three songs — two in English, one in Arabic — before a dramatic, some would say rabble-rousing, encore.

Born Steven Georgiou, the son of a Greek Cypriot restaurant owner and a Swedish mother, the singer, now 48, said he wants to "see how music can play a part in shaping Islam in Europe". He has spent much of the past two decades campaigning for Islamic causes such as Kashmir, and running a school in Brondesbury, in the North London borough of Brent, with the apparent support for the fatwa



Islam, formerly Cat Stevens, in Sarajevo, sings songs he wrote after being inspired by Bosnian Muslim folk music

hearing Bosnian folk melodies inspired a return to his musical roots.

Relaxing in the nearby Hotel Bosna before the concert, Islam was happy to talk to television crews and journalists about his faith and the new unadorned music with which he praises God, but the past was largely off-limits. A milder in the lift on the way up to his room suggested, for example, that Yusuf's apparent support for the fatwa

against Salman Rushdie should not be mentioned.

Earlier in the day Islam had a meeting with President Alija Izetbegovic — "an amazing man, he came out of jail to become President, what a story". Did he regret a past from which he cannot hide? "As Muslims we accept what God has written," said Islam. "Some of the songs have more meaning now than when I wrote them."

Under pressure, he admit-

ted still singing hits such as *Morning Has Broken* to his youngest daughter, but that it would be "too much" to ever sing them in public again. Saturday's songs, entitled *Little Ones and Mother, Father, Sister, Brother*, bore the simplicity of the Cat Stevens of old, but were strictly Islamic in content.

Islam's concert attracted little publicity yet still managed to pack Skendaria to the rafters with a cross-section of

Swiss put English top of the class

FROM PETER CAPELLA
IN GENEVA

A MAJORITY of Swiss people want their children to learn English as a second language instead of another of Switzerland's four other national tongues, according to an opinion poll.

Sixty per cent of German-speaking Swiss would like English to be taught at school before French, while 57 per cent of French-speakers had a similar preference for English as a second language over German, the survey in the weekly *Facts* indicated.

Language teaching is regarded as a key binding agent that overcomes the social tensions inherent in Switzerland's linguistic diversity. Sixty-four per cent of the country's seven million inhabitants live in German-speaking areas, 19 per cent in the French-speaking west and 7.6 per cent in Italian areas in the south. Romansh is spoken by only about 40,000 people. The three main languages are granted equal official status in the Constitution.

The survey was published as education chiefs sought to defend the teaching of French, German or Italian as a second language throughout Switzerland. Regional authorities in Zurich are examining a project that would break away from national practice by introducing English early in primary school by 2000.

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CASH CRISIS THREATENS UN

New York: The future of the United Nations has been put in jeopardy by the collapse in the US Congress of a compromise on funding the organisation (James Bone writes).

As diplomats were gearing up last week to meet the threat from President Saddam Hussein over arms inspections, Congress dropped legislation

on UN funding because of an unrelated dispute between the Republican majority and the Clinton Administration over abortion. The UN faces financial ruin next year because of the shortfall: Washington, which pays 25 per cent of the body's budget, owes \$1.3 billion (£812 million), or 60 per cent of its unpaid dues.

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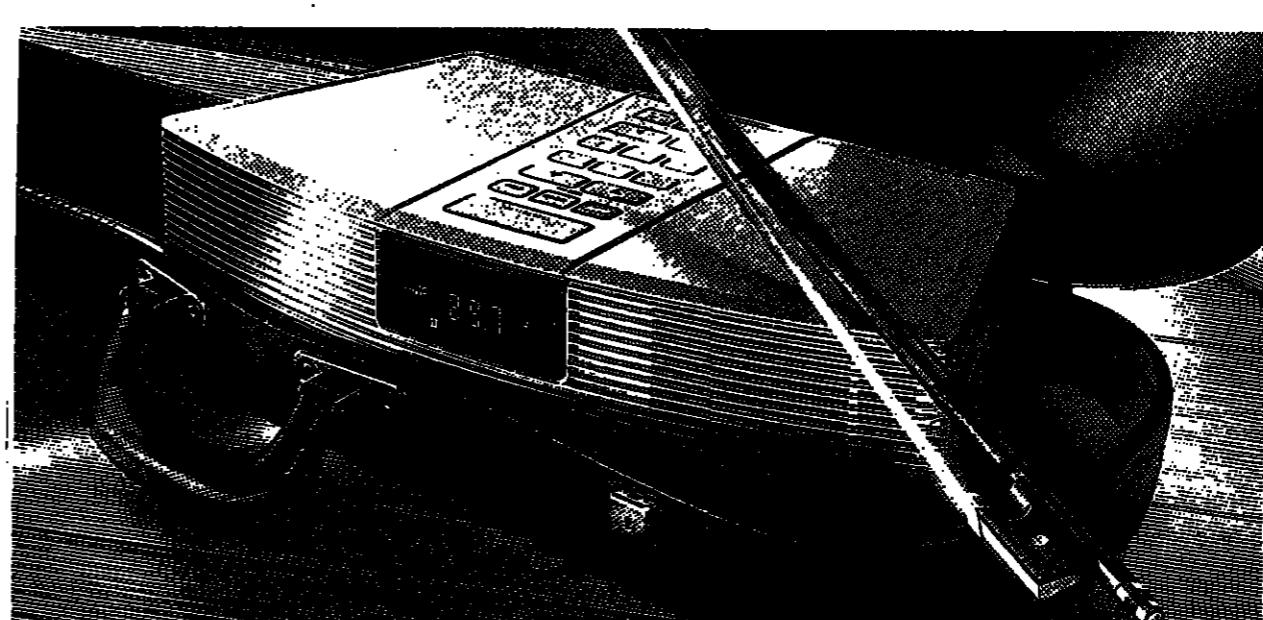
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Immobile Europeans must get moving if monetary union is to work

Soft-hearted *Times* correspondents have long been the natural target for foreigners wanting to work or study in Britain.

The telephone rings: it is the landlord's daughter, Steffi, on the line. She is a fourth-year medical student looking with increasing desperation for a placement in a London hospital. A bearded young man pops his head around the office door, sure that *The Times* knows how to secure a job as a vet in Yorkshire.

Most of these pleasant young people are stunned by British employers and are lucky if they even receive a rejection letter. Similar obstacles exist for the British trying

INSIDE GERMANY



BY ROGER BOYES

to work in Germany. Indeed, there are hurdles throughout the European Union. German researchers have been struck by the immobility of Europeans. Only 2.3 per cent of Germany's 81 million in-

habitants come from another EU state. In Britain, Spain and Denmark, the proportion is even smaller. "Movements between the European Union states have barely increased," said Heinz Werner, migration expert at the Nuremberg Labour Research Institute. The Eurostat figures bear him out. In 1992, when the EU had three fewer members, and the single market was in its infancy, 2.6 million Europeans were working in other states. By 1995, the number had dropped to 2.5 million.

Labour movement matters if European economic and monetary union is to function. Americans typically change jobs — and locations

nine times in their careers, but Europeans shift only three times. Moreover, American highways are full of large caravans or whole prefabricated houses on trailers, as the unemployed of one state move to a more prosperous region. Euro-land will have none of this flexibility. If there is another oil crisis, the continent will be dotted with new *Mezzogiorno* dependent on European structural funds.

The American option — to travel in search of work or to sell labour more cheaply — will not be available. Even inside Germany the labour force seems to be frozen to the ground.

North Germans, once the most adventurous, move only reluctantly to Bavaria even though employment rates in the south are much higher. Even the internal migration from blighted eastern Germany to the west has slowed down.

As for trying to persuade German executives to settle abroad for their companies, personnel managers are in despair. Siemens is having to insist that executives serve time abroad if they are to be considered for senior positions. Top civil servants are reluctant to take on influential jobs with organisations such as the International Monetary Fund. Jacques Attali, when he was the head

of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, trawled Frankfurt in vain for bankers willing to work in London. Younger executives are nervous about redundancy and would prefer to stay closer to headquarters gossip, and be ready to benefit from German labour law and social security.

Mass unemployment is breeding a new conservatism among 30-year-olds, many of whom seem to have narrowed their life goal down to acquiring their own house in the country. These are cultural impediments to a mobile Europe, adding to the obvious language barriers. Bureaucracy also deters the worker from straying across

frontiers. A Dane crossing into Germany to work pays Danish taxes and German social welfare contributions; that is, he pays twice.

In many countries, the mood is so hostile to foreign workers "stealing" domestic jobs that immigration authorities feel it their patriotic duty to drag their feet and lose forms.

The Italian authorities can take months to register a foreigner, who then finds it difficult to open a bank account and receive his salary. British builders in Normandy have problems getting electricity because their cable apparently does not meet French safety standards. Houses vacated by British forces in Berlin stayed empty because the wiring did not conform to German standards: it was therefore deemed unsafe for Germans.

Herz Kohl, the German Chancellor, has joined the British Government ahead of the Euro summit in calling for more deregulation of the labour market. But the German leader and his European colleagues should be concentrating on a top-to-bottom social deregulation which makes practical the most neglected of integrated Europe's credos, the freedom of movement. If he wants ECU to work, he will have to get on his bike; it is time that Europe started moving.

OLEG NIMISHIN AP

Oilfields foster Azerbaijan's dream of riches

Baku is booming again after 70 years of neglect
writes Richard Beeston

with Texan oil men in cowboy boots and Caucasian energy officials in astrakhan fur hats, as waiters passed around the caviare canapes.

To an outsider the scene might look surreal. Until only a few months ago Baku, for all its fading glory, looked much like any other depressed former Soviet city where post-

Communist turmoil had destroyed the economy and impoverished its people.

The scale of the changes are hard for many Baku citizens to fathom. Thomas Goltz, an established Baku resident and the author of *Azerbaijan Diaries*, said that only a few years ago even the most basic commodity was impossible to find. "Forget the shiny new Mercedes and casinos," he said. "My yardstick for how far Baku has come is that you could not even buy something as basic as a toilet seat only a couple of years ago." Now visitors can choose between two five-star hotels, eat in Mexican or Cajun restaurants and no self-respecting Baku citizen would be seen dead without their mobile phone.

The speed of the transformation is largely credited to President Aliev, the sly former Communist Party politburo member whose ruthless leadership has brought political stability and billion-pound foreign investment deals. However, Baku's cosmopolitan population has never stopped dreaming of a return to the glory days. After the Tsar liberalised the oil industry in 1872, the city

became the centre of the first oil rush, while Western adventurers and illiterate local traders became millionaires overnight. Magnates, responsible for supplying half the world's oil output by the turn of the century, spent their wealth on lavish villas, opera houses and even a replica of the casino in Monte Carlo.

The Nobels, who estab-

lished one of the largest oil

companies in Baku, created

the city's first public gardens, importing thousands of plants

and even topsoil to recreate a

little slice of Scandinavia on

the barren and oily shores of

the Caspian. Later, the Rothschilds financed the railway which allowed the oil to reach

the markets of Europe.

Even today, just a short

drive from the city centre, a

forest of rusting derricks set in

lakes of spent oil serves as a

living symbol of the once

thriving industry, which was

diverted during 70 years of

Communist rule to serving the

interests of the Soviet state.

Now that the wealth once

again belongs to Azerbaijan,

many are lining up for a

share, not least the British,

who are continuing a long

established relationship here.

They can usually be found

in Baku's new pubs, the Lord

Nelson and Winston, where

British Airways stewards

are chatted up by oil drillers,

travelling businessmen and

energy consultants.

However, sceptics warn that

the headlong rush for petro-

dollars may be premature.

Much of the real wealth will only begin to materialise in the middle of the next decade after the Western investors have been paid off. Oil veterans advise against expecting a country with one million refugees, from the war with Armenia, a bloated and corrupt bureaucracy and collapsing Soviet infrastructure to become rich overnight.



One of the thousands of oil derricks near Baku that once supplied oil for the Soviet state. Now many foreigners are queuing up for a share

Yeltsin aide rebuked over book money

FROM ROBIN LODGE
IN MOSCOW

AANATOLI CHUBAIS, the First Deputy Prime Minister and chief architect of Russia's reform programme, faces a hard struggle to regain his political authority after narrowly escaping dismissal at

the weekend over his acceptance of a large cash advance from a Russian publisher.

On Saturday, President Yeltsin dismissed two associates of Mr Chubais, Maxim Boiko, the Deputy Prime Minister for Privatisation, and Pyotr Mostovoi, head of the Russian Bankruptcy Agency.

for receiving their share of \$450,000 (£272,000) as an advance for a book on privatisation to be co-written with Mr Chubais and three other associates. The money was paid by Segodnya-Press, a publisher part-owned by an affiliate of Onerixbank, one of the country's largest banks and a big

beneficiary of sales of state companies.

A Kremlin statement on Saturday said Mr Yeltsin had rebuked Mr Chubais and pointed out the error of his actions. But he rejected an offer by Mr Chubais, also Minister of Finance, to resign. "The President did not think the law had been violated, but considered such actions by state officials to be incorrect." The two men had a second conversation yesterday, but no details were released.

The dispute comes as Mr Chubais and other members of the Government are trying to push next year's budget through the opposition-dominated State Duma, the lower house of parliament, which called on Friday for an investigation into the payment of advances to officials. Mr Chubais conceded that the payments, of which he is understood to have received a share of \$90,000, were excessive, but said the bulk had been donated to charity.

The Duma is to debate the budget on Wednesday, and opposition deputies, who have long regarded Mr Chubais as a figure of particular loathing, are certain to renew calls for his dismissal. Gennadi Zyuganov, the Communist Party leader, yesterday accused the Government of attempting to cover up "billions" leaking away in all directions under Chubais's guidance. The fuss... is just a small tip of the gigantic iceberg of corruption that permeates the executive branch of power," he told the Interfax news agency.

Most analysts agree Mr Yeltsin can ill afford to dismiss Mr Chubais, who has personified economic policy since the presidential elections. Interfax quoted a Kremlin source as saying the President felt that such a move would destabilise the Government and seriously damage the economy.

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Stalinist Marchais dies at 77 in Paris

FROM BEN MACINTYRE
IN PARIS

GEORGES MARCHAIS, the veteran Stalinist who ran the French Communist Party for two decades, died yesterday in a Paris hospital at the age of 77.

Marchais, born the year the Communist Party was founded, stuck to his hardline views against the tide of history, and never deviated from the belief that Communist rule had been "globally positive".

Beard-browed, aggressive and a master in the art of political survival, Marchais was elected secretary-general of the party in 1972 and finally stepped down in 1994, handing over leadership to the more liberal Robert Hue.

Colleagues yesterday paid tribute to one of the key figures of postwar French politics, but Marchais will be remembered principally as an old-fashioned and rigid Soviet-style leader, who presided over the steady decline of his party.

He played down human rights abuses in the Soviet Union, and even his most chronic misjudgments — such as supporting the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia — were dismissed as "errors of analysis".

Obituary, page 25

Death of abused 'Cinderella', 9, stains New York

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

AN ANGUISHED New York is searching its civic soul after a nine-year-old girl was found dead at her Bronx home, having succumbed to advanced gangrene, malnutrition, numerous cigarette burns and a badly fractured skull. She had missed school for more than two months. Such absences should trigger a child abuse alert — but she slipped through the net.

Sabrina Green lived with her sister, 32, and the latter's boyfriend. Both have been arrested and charged with manslaughter, criminally negligent homicide and endangering the welfare of a child.

At a memorial service yesterday, Ronald Kelly, her father — a methadone addict who had not seen Sabrina since she was five — lashed out at the city's educational and childcare authorities, saying: "All I can see are her little hands reaching out and no one to help her."

Sabrina was found dead last week after an anonymous caller alerted the ambulance service to "an unconscious child" at the Edenvale public housing estate. The rescue services found her body bound to a bed and covered in festering sores. Untreated burns covered her face and hands. Gangrene, caused by

the loss of her right thumb, had blackened her right arm. She was emaciated, and her skull had a fracture caused by a blunt instrument.

The discovery led to an outcry in the press, which focused on Sabrina having missed school since early September. It is common practice to treat such chronic absence as an indicator of possible child abuse, yet there was no abuse from her school.

Under New York city law, if a pupil is absent for ten consecutive days school authorities must notify the Administration for Children's Services. That welfare body is then obliged to make a mandatory home visit. No one did in this case.

Authorities at Sabrina's school now claim that a telephone call was made, and that Yvette Green, her sister, said that the child was in hospital. Yet there is no note of a call, nor even of a follow-up. New York newspapers said that Sabrina was often marked present in class when she was absent.

Rudy Crew, New York's Schools Chancellor, has conceded that the "system failed Sabrina Green". He said: "I am going to be very forthright. I don't think the system handled this very well. I am not

into forgiveness. I want to know who did what, when and where." Investigations are now focused on Ms Green, a mother of ten children aged from three to 17, and her unemployed boyfriend. Reports have emerged of how Ms Green treated Sabrina as a "Cinderella", starving her, punishing her, locking her up and beating her.

Sabrina was born with

traces of crack in her system to an drug-addict mother, who died in 1991. She was placed in the care of a friend of her mother, who treated her well and enrolled her at a private school before dying in 1996.

Then a family court entrusted the vivacious and intelligent pupil to Ms Green, who moved her to a dilapidated school. After that, Sabrina's condition apparently worsened rapidly.

□ Police "suicide": A Long Island teenager with gambling debts committed "suicide by cop" yesterday — confronting two policemen with a toy gun, causing them to open fire. A note in a car belonging to Moshe Pergament, 19, the son of a wealthy property developer, said: "I'm sorry to get you involved. I just wanted to die." He owed \$6,000 (£3,550), mostly to bookmakers.



Kelly Flinn in her air force days before she was forced to resign over a love affair

Britain begins battle for euro influence

FROM CHARLES BREMNER
IN BRUSSELS

THE Government's drive to exert British leadership in the European Union will be tested today when Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, bids in the face of French and German opposition for a seat at the planned high table of countries taking part in monetary union.

As a non-participant when the single currency is launched, Britain will have no voice in the planned euro council, a body intended to co-ordinate policies among the countries inside the proposed currency zone.

The future finance ministers' forum is supposed to be informal, but Britain and the other likely non-members, Greece, Sweden and Denmark, are worried that EU power inevitably will gravitate to it, leaving the law-making Ecolin council of all 15 members an empty shell.

At the first debate on the new body in Brussels today, Mr Brown is expected to make the case for Britain to have an observer's seat. But Lionel Jospin, the French Prime Minister, has ruled out the idea and German officials say they can see no reason for including non-members, a view shared by The Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg. "If you want to be at the table, then join the euro club," a senior Dutch official said.

Britain is also working to clip the wings of the future council, which the French are projecting as a body with global clout, along the lines of the G7 group of leading industrialised nations. In this, Britain can exploit misgivings in Germany, the Commission and the future European Central Bank, which are all worried that the council could inject politics into the management of the euro.

The central bank, which will be formed in the middle of next year after the choice of participants in the new currency, is the subject of intense Franco-German skirmishing.

President Chirac is pressing a French candidate for its presidency against the German-backed favourite. Germany has also hinted at favouring a reserved seat for Britain on the bank's six-member directorate, but France and most other states flatly oppose the idea, saying that Britain must wait until it decides to embrace the euro.

Limiting the loss of influence from Britain's decision to stay out of Europe's paramount project is a priority for the Government as it prepares to take over the six-month EU presidency in January.

Pilot in sex scandal considered suicide

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

KELLY FLINN, the former Air Force pilot who was the first woman to fly a B52, considered suicide before she was forced to resign over her affair with a married civilian.

Ms Flinn was an enraged and stricken woman underneath the composed exterior displayed in public during her ordeal last May, according to excerpts from her book, *Proud to Be*, appearing in this week's *NewswEEK*.

Ms Flinn describes herself

breaking down and going on a destructive rampage under pressure from her own lawyers and family to leave the service with a less than honourable discharge. Failing that, they warned her, she faced a court martial and quite possibly a prison sentence for adultery, lying and disobeying orders.

"I climbed into my Jeep and drove back to my house in a rage," Ms Flinn writes. "I kicked open the door and

marched into the living room. There were framed pictures of my pilot training my framed diploma from the Air Force Academy, some awards I'd received. I pulled each one of them off the walls."

When family members came to talk to her, she sank into a chair and curled up in a fetal position, clutching a stuffed elephant. "There was broken glass everywhere. My face was swollen with crying. I had blood on my hands ... Finally, when I realised no one would ever understand my feelings, my pain, my frustrations, I screamed at the top of my lungs, I resign! Just get out of my house!"

She never attempted suicide, "but I thought about it hard. I imagined what my suicide note would say and to whom I'd send it. I knew where a gun was hidden in a friend's house. I imagined ... getting it." In the long term she says, her resignation was the right decision.

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'Two good parents is ideal. One good one is good enough'

Christa Worthington reflects on why she joined a group that helps single women to become mothers

Someone, a date, I think, once asked me if I was afraid of death. Pensive youth that I was, I said no. I wasn't afraid of dying; I was afraid of never having lived.

Well, I didn't marry him or anyone else, and I'm still thinking such thoughts, but they are more pressing now that half my life has gone by. For years I hoarded motherhood carefully, like a squirrel does nuts. I planned to retrieve it one day when I was absolutely safe and sound.

Throughout my thirties my thoughts about babies were often sad and anxious, given that I wasn't becoming a mother when I expected to. But as soon as I had the luck to fall in love, I would revert to glowing optimism, attached to the

a particular man. And all would be right with the world — for a time.

Now I am reinventing the world. There is, at the moment, no father for a child of mine, no husband for me, and what if there never is? I have had to stare this scenario in the face, and to my surprise, it hasn't killed me. Instead, I can have my life by claiming the decision of whether or not to become a mother. The decision does not belong entirely to time and circumstances, nor does it belong to anybody else.

This much — the thinking about it — comes as a liberation. At the far end of my childbearing years, choice, the feminist banner I waved in the Seventies, is painted in very different colours. To control fertility now means having the



Christa Worthington: "There is, now, no father for a child of mine, no husband for me. What if there never is? I have had to stare this scenario in the face; to my surprise, it hasn't killed me"

option of conceiving without a man in the picture — a freedom that brings with it awesome responsibility and, like abortion, the occasional wrath of others.

In the parlance of Single Mothers by Choice (SMC), a 15-year-old national support group for women like me, I have become a "Thinker": someone still in the Rodin pose, who has not yet gone prone, into "trying", through

insemination by an anonymous donor or someone I know. I am also considering adoption. I haven't made up my mind: I'm too preoccupied with wrestling my biological time limit to the ground. It's a weirdly omnipotent yet powerless position — being intensely aware of your reproductive capacities as you watch them fade to black.

"To think," in SMC terms, is to enter a gestation period very like a pregnancy, with its own queasiness, cravings and sensations. It has its emotional distortions and its highs and lows, all moving on the rock

bed, slippery and unforgiving, of reality. If I do pair my genetic material with that of an anonymous sperm donor, I will be accused of contributing to the breakdown of the family just as I manage to make one. Though there has been loud public debate over the rights of gay couples to have children, and though infertile couples have the world's sympathy, discussion of the single woman's journey to the edge of fertility is taboo. There is a perceived failure in it.

For me, the real failure would be not to decide, but to let denial do it for me. I see this and cringe: the 48-year-old who believes that nature will make an exception in her case. I do not want to be an eternal girl-woman. "There is a lot of denial," says Jane Mattes, the founder of SMC. "You see it especially among women with money. But there's a limit to fertility, even with money. You spend 20 years trying not to get pregnant; then you turn around and find that it's hard to conceive," she says, voicing the lament of my generation.

Mrs Mattes, a psychotherapist, convened a group of single mothers, like herself, in her home in 1981. By 1982 the group had become a non-

profit organisation, and now has members in most states. She and other mothers share information, run workshops for Thinkers, Tryers and Stuck Thinkers, and network through an SMC newsletter. Of the group's 2,000 members, 98 per cent have a college education, and on average this group earns \$42,000 (£26,000) a year, about \$10,000 more than the average American man in the same age group. Statistics indicate that by 2001, up to 40 per cent of all babies born in the United States will be to single mothers. "People hear that there are two parents and assume they are good parents," says Mrs Mattes. "Two good parents is the ideal. One good parent is good enough."

Fifty per cent of Thinkers decide not to have a child. What is the difference between the Thinker who tries and one who doesn't? "You have to grieve the loss of thought: your life is the thought of the ideal," Ms Mattes says. That, for me, is the irony of being a Thinker: you must embrace the heart-rending imperfections that you have spent a lifetime sowing smooth: making sure not to marry the wrong man or put a child in a shaky situation.

The key is to not see yourself as a failure," says my friend Ruth, seven months pregnant by anonymous donor insemination (DI), and I feel a flood of relief. I held the door open for Ruth at my first SMC meeting, and she has since shot past me, to pregnancy by a donor whose long form (medical and genetic history going back three generations) and audiotape she liked. "I still want a husband for me and a father for my child. I still have that dream," she says. "I've just postponed it."

A year ago, Ruth and I

walked into an SMC meeting in Manhattan together, in the basement of a community centre that felt like a bomb shelter. Where were the men? Had there been a war? Women of all shapes and sizes, beautiful and not, well-off and not, had gathered in a circle of chairs around toddlers fighting over toys. Anxiety was palpable among the Tryers, though not from the Mothers — they seemed serene. DI is an emotional rollercoaster of hope and disappointment that can go on for months at (at least) \$700 a cycle. A few of the women had quasi-partners in the wings: longstanding relationships with married or unavailable men.

asks the nurse in the waiting room of the fertility clinic. I have come here for preliminary tests, to buy time as I waste it. Crates holding frozen sperm in containers of liquid nitrogen are left, like milk, by the door. "No, I'm looking for sperm," I say, and the rock star on the modular sofa laughs. The doctor directs me to binders of profiles, selected at random from the sperm bank, from which I am to pursue my future. (Photos of sperm donors remain unavailable, even though photos of young female egg donors are offered in triplicate — smiling, full-length, and in close-up.)

"We'll start with DI, and if that doesn't work in a few months, we'll go to in vitro," he declares. In vitro, extracting eggs to fertilise in a Petri dish, is an entirely different animal to me, one that costs \$7,000 to \$10,000 a try. So I am cheered by the note on a donor form, written in the donor's own hand, that his mother looked like Liz Taylor "without the ensuing weight gain". I feel torrents of warmth for this man. But he's "out", as in "sold out", when I phone the 800 number to order.

"I think my donor's cute," says Ruth, never having seen him, and she offers me his donor number, four digits long. This is an incredible act of generosity. We could have siblings! (He has also sold out.) I later learn that SMC has started a sibling registry. "I want to tell you to just go ahead," Ruth says. "But I know it's a hard decision." She seems so far ahead of me, as well as near. "I really can't wait to see this kid," she says in a tone unique to this new blind faith, and we fall silent thinking those old thoughts: Whose hair? Whose eyes?

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Manchester United ruined my life

PETER NICHOLLS

Supporting Manchester City is one of football's great lost causes. So why do five old friends keep doing it? Interview by Jason Cowley

Their Manchester City fans will never forget Sunday, May 5, 1956 — the day their beloved team were relegated after losing at home to Liverpool, and their despised rivals, Manchester United, won the FA Carling Premiership. It was the day, too, when four men returned to the city of their childhood to mark more than 40 years of friendship and devotion to one of football's great lost causes: supporting Manchester City.

They were Colin Shindler, a writer and producer, David Green, a film director and managing director of September Films, Jeffrey Cohen and Michael Chaddick. "It was the most extraordinary weekend," Shindler says. "It seemed like this siren call had gone out from Maine Road [City's home ground], drawing people home from all over the world."

Howard Davies, a close friend of Shindler and chairman of the Financial Services Association — as well as former Deputy Governor of the Bank of England — was also at a game given added resonance by the fact that it coincided with the 40th anniversary of City's FA Cup Final victory over Birmingham — when the Manchester goalkeeper, Bert Trautmann, a former German prisoner-of-war, famously played on in great pain after breaking his neck.

The friends' reunion inspired Shindler to write *Manchester United Ruined My Life*, an autobiographical account of his devotion to Manchester City, which will be published by Hodder Headline next spring. The book touches on the glorious irrationality of fandom, something psychologically complex and bound up with tribalism and feelings of identity and belonging. It is a powerful force over which one has absolutely no control.

For the true fan, loyalties formed in childhood can never be altered; not even if, as in the case of Manchester City, supporting a failure of a football club brings with it only misery and dejection, brings with it, as it does for Shindler and his friends, the only source of weakness in a life of professional strength.

The contrast between the position of the two Manchester clubs could not be starker. United, the richest and arguably most glamorous club in the world, are top of the Premiership and among the favourites to win the European Cup. For United the 1990s has been a procession of success: four championships, two FA Cups and two Doubles; their wealth is boosted by an incomparable merchandising empire.

City, in a state of perpetual crisis, are floundering at the bottom of the First Division. The club, which has the potential to be one of the biggest in England, has never been in a worse position in its 110-year history. A second relegation in three years is possible.

Unlike City, with its stadium in depressed Moss Side and support drawn largely from within Manchester, United are a national, even international, club, with a cosmopolitan glamour. The old joke about never hearing a Manchester accent at Old Trafford — United's marvellous stadium — has a ring of satirical truth; there are as many Cockney as Mancunian



Shindler with his hero Colin Bell

As a financial regulator, Davies leads a life, he says, of bounded rationality: quantitative, rigorous, analytical. "My work involves logic and rationality. Yet supporting City is clearly irrational. What is happening at the club is disastrous, awful; but no matter how bad it gets I have this emotional attachment to them that I cannot break."

As for Davies, so with Shindler and Green: supporting City is a tie that binds, a narrative thread linking their boyhood in Manchester to their London lives of ambition and affluence at a mutual friend's party. But in fairness to Howard, he was probably going bald precisely because he was one of the few Manchester City fans. Even in those days there seemed to be a huge dominance of United fans — what with the Busby Babes and, later, the Munich disaster."

For his part, Davies has no recollection of David Green at primary school. "I met him at Oxford," he says, sternly. "He introduced me to Colin, who was at Cambridge, and with whom I go to watch City all the time. I haven't seen David at many games."

Even in their contempt for United the two old university friends are at odds. Davies, describing himself as a City rather than a football fan, would rather never watch another match than see United. "I absolutely loathe them. What gets to me about United is their ubiquity; you can't avoid them. They've even got Bobby Charlton's daughter presenting the weather."

Green, who gently dismisses Shindler and Davies as roundheads ("in Howard's case quite literally"), concedes

that as a "flash bugger" he ought to follow United. He is also more "cavalier" in his support of City, less intense in his loathing of United. He says: "Colin and I have light and shade in our relationship between United and City; we are as passionate as Howard, but much more objective. The reason, I think, is that Colin and I have brothers who are fanatical United fans. Howard is an only child and his obsession is total. Siblings bring balance to opinion: Howard is total in his likes and dislikes; he loves success and hates failure. But at the centre of his life is this disaster zone that contradicts everything he believes in."

Again Davies disagrees.

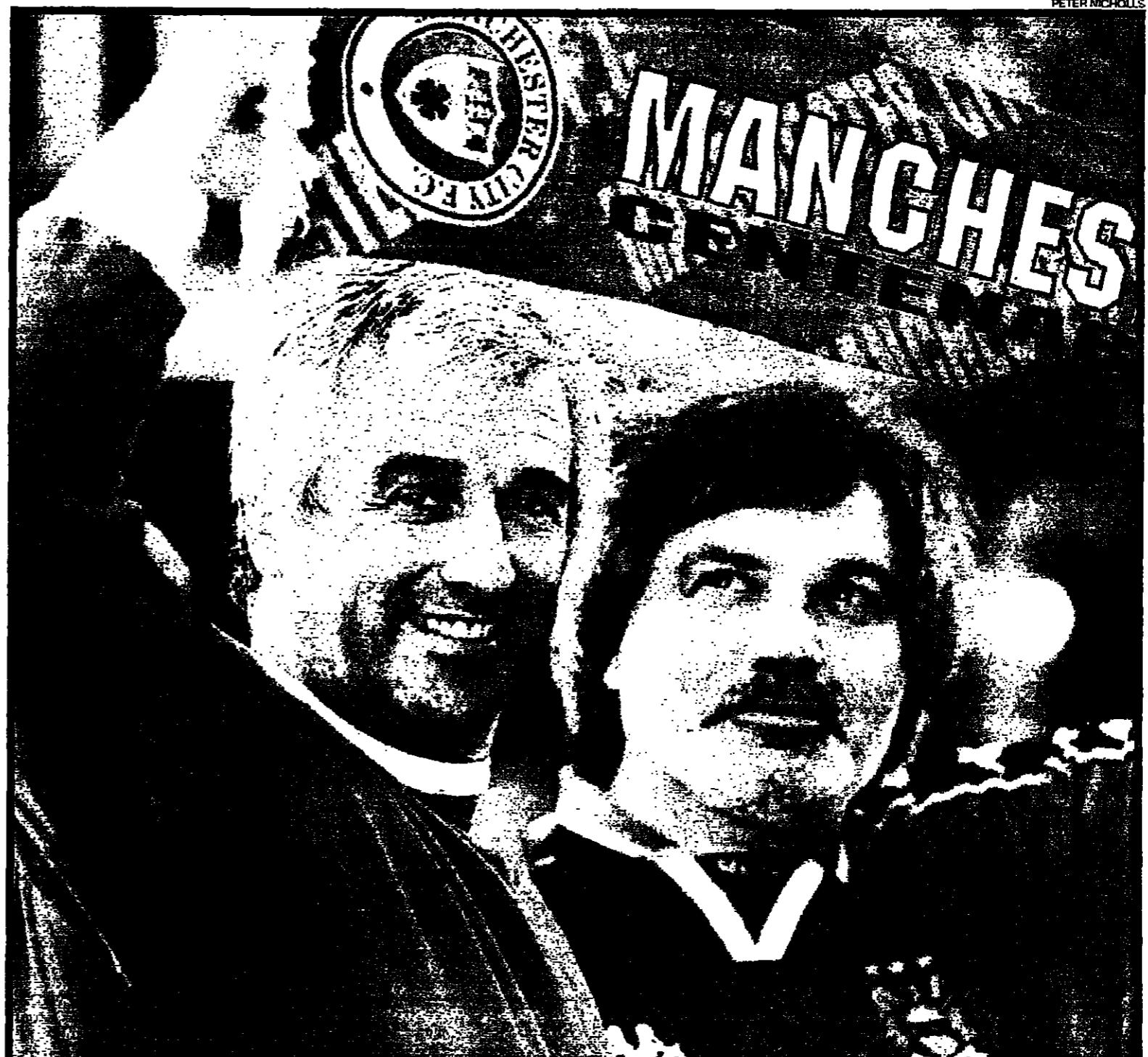
They clearly seek to discover abundance in loss, by locating happiness in the search for glory rather than in its realisation; in the pursuit of happiness, not its fulfilment. Shindler says: "Yes, you're right. I rather like being an outsider, the whingeing bloke on the sidelines, not part of the in-crowd. I like the fact that City will always be seen as the other club in town. This was the case even when we were the better team in the late 1960s and early 1970s. I would hate it if City became fashionable." And so would Davies and Green, who concedes that City's failure is a levelling influence in his life.

But are they being a touch disingenuous? As the chosen team of the Gallagher brothers of Oasis, City surely have acquired a kind of negative glamour, a frayed fashionability, as it were. Green partially agrees, but counters thus: "But even here United have the edge. Look, City might have the rude and vulgar Gallagher brothers as supporters, but United's star player, David Beckham, goes out with one of the Spice Girls. You see what I mean: it's cooler having a player who goes to bed with a Spice Girl than famous supporters who are rude and disgusting. United seem to top City at every stage."

The room fills with laughter. You leave them trading soft insults like boys as they rummage in their sports bags for their light blue Manchester City shirts.



Howard Davies: "My support for City is tribal"



Shindler and David Green: supporting City is the tie that binds, a thread linking their boyhood in Manchester to their London lives of ambition and affluence

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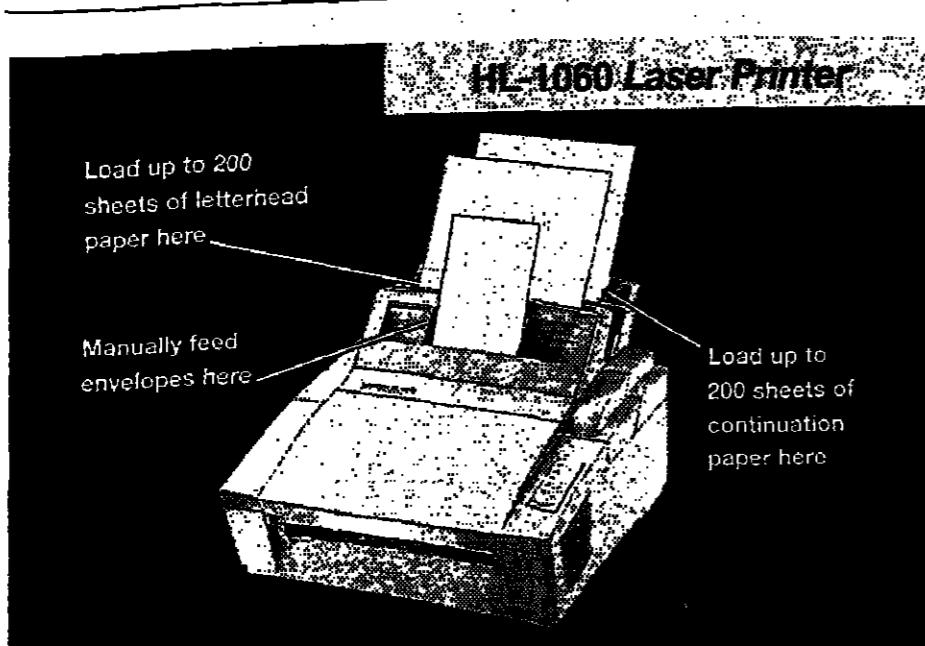
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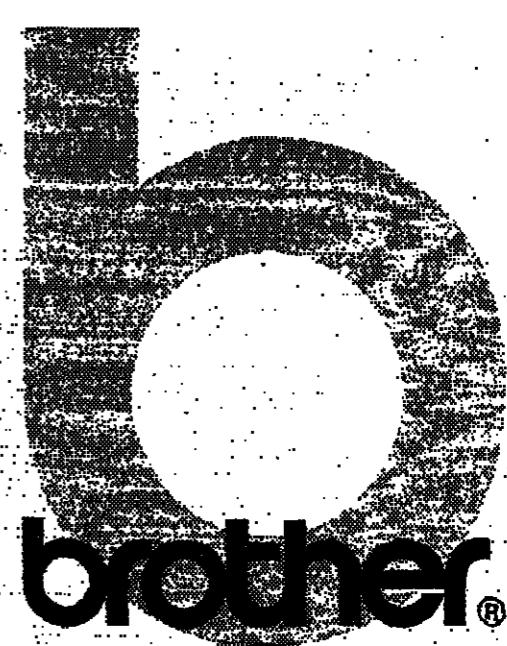
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A few weeks ago a university lecturer accused me in one of his lectures of being a white, heterosexual, male English novelist. Clearly he wanted his students to perceive this as a crucial limitation, even evidence of a malaise, for he added that these crimes meant that I was a supporter of the canon of English literature — Chaucer, Shakespeare, George Eliot, Waugh, Murdoch — which meant that I was utterly condemned in the estimation of lecturers such as himself, forgers of the new charter of letters.

Perhaps this is an isolated incident. I've been told that the universities of Britain are emptying of the sloganising, politically correct tormentors of yesterday. That caricature was reinforced by the fiction of colleagues whose careers straddled the academy and the novel in which they so often gave their learned colleagues a very bad press. If those of us who did not read English at university have a fearful view of what goes on there, then our perception, our fault can be laid at

Why am I published and damned?

the pages of those who brought us news from the front in their damning fictions. So the accusation may have been the stray remark of a sad leftover.

Nevertheless, it pricked up my ears because it has undoubtedly resonance. One day, possibly, it may seem a good time to attempt to set down at some length a chronicle of the trajectory that took me from scribbling Keatsian (as I hoped) verse in secret at 15 to the publishing of a novel ten years later and going on from there. There were obstacles and surprises which might bear the telling, not least the continuing involvement of English literature and its critics with the English class system and its endless permutations. There is also the clash between the sensibilities and perceptions of the working class and those of other cultures in this society — often as wide a gap as

that between civilisations.

Then there is the whole issue of being involved in the media as well as in writing, and the way that relationship has corkscrewed through the past three decades.

But this white male heterosexual English is worth a few remarks now, because it applies to many of us writing today. It may be open to instant rebuttal to say that being a WMHE author over the past three decades has indeed felt like being not so much marginal-



literature about women and literature not only explaining but championing women gathered great force from the 1960s. Its association with a vital and necessary movement in society gave it a relevance

specifically from a non-white past. Some claim to discover in that past a reservoir of energy denied to whites because of their guilt, shame and exhaustion. The non-whites had it.

And the non-heterosexuals. Once again a stream which has run steadily through English literature for centuries became a flood after oppressive and unfair laws were cut off and homosexuality could disengage itself from criminality and public opprobrium. Again, almost step by step with feminism and non-white literature, the tide brought in a new mass of work which, again, almost defined itself against the WMHE novelists.

All this has some historical validity and has brought many positive qualities in the novel. What our lecturer missed, though, was the most important thing of all. Simply, never trust the teller, trust the tale. Good fiction, like any other art, can choose to come from the most unexpected sources — and even in 1997 that includes white male heterosexual Englishmen.

JOAN MARCUS/MARC BRYAN-BROWN

Disney roars on stage

The Lion King New York

If you were feeling unkind, or maybe just being painfully frank, you could dismiss Disney's movie of *The Lion King* as a not-very-inventive cartoon that got pretty preachy about that all-American obsession: the need to prove yourself to a loving but demanding Pa. Equally, you might accuse Disney's stage version of *Beauty and the Beast* of being a piece of sentimental frippery whose dancing cups and saucers were the more irritating for their over-abundance of technological wizardry.

But your sour feelings about the Disneyites would surely vanish after an evening in the New Amsterdam theatre. Not only have they transformed a derelict old playhouse in the grittiest part of 42nd Street into a pleasure dome that looks as if it has been jointly decorated by Della Robbia and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Their stage version of *The Lion King* is imaginatively so superior both to the movie version and to *Beauty and the Beast* that it left this ageing

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No lion sleeps tonight: the unique power of theatre and Julie Taymor's brilliant designs bring Elton John's *Circle of Life* song dazzlingly to life

That explains why there is no attempt wholly to disguise the actors. A human chorus sometimes appears, swaying and singing in full tribal costume. Since you can see them, you are always aware that people are manipulating creatures that take scores of forms: puppets big and little, masks large and small, stylised bodies with bits of person protruding from them, birds whirling from sticks, even a Heath Robinson trike tricked out with tiny, leaping antelopes. A giraffe is variously

an elegant sculpture on spindly crutches and stilts, a gaudy wigwam with a skull on top, and a silhouette glimpsed behind a white cloth.

Though geysers spout and the dead Mufasa's face spectacularly appears from a heaving mass of clouds and rocks, the high-tech stuff is unobtrusive or non-existent. Drought is signalled simply by a blue cloth slowly disappearing into a hole. The marvellously inventive stampede that kills Samuel Wright's Mufasa (himself a majestic blend of

pharaoh, Roman centurion and leonine superhero) ends with him lost amid clattering figures with vast wildebeest masks and hairy, satyr-like legs. Tribal ceremony and mythic story become one.

Elton John and Tim Rice's more un-African songs, which include that perky ode to sloth *Hakuna Matata* and a beautiful lament for lost paradise called *Shadowland*, might have clashed with the veld-and-jungle mood; but Taymor's production bounced me into buying them and, indeed,

everything else. It takes exceptional skill to integrate John Vickery's sneering, lacquered Scar with Max Casella's jockey meerkat, and them with vegetation that variously consists of simple fronds and spiky grasses, balloon-like bulges of cacti, and green-painted dancers — but Taymor brings it off.

Myself, I was far too preoccupied with the crocs snapping below a croc-shaped waterfall, the hyena lowlife that was snickering its way through the elephant ossuary

Horse play but no fun

The shock of Peter Shaffer's 1973 classic will always be the obscene, wilful act of a 17-year-old boy who blinds six horses with a metal spike. Even now, in a culture supposedly hardened to such arbitrary violence, this act still has a taboo-like impact.

Terry Hands launches his first season as artistic director of Theatre Clywd with a daring staging set in slate-like darkness with characters picked out by lonely spotlights. Here, in a flurry of intense encounters, we witness the uncanny spell that the horse-mad boy Alan Strang exerts on the imagination of his middle-aged psychologist, Martin Dysart. A single chair provides the only visible sign of comfort in a sapping first half that short-circuits Alan's supposed madness with Martin's spiritually bankrupt life.

It proves a surreal, slightly dreamy match in which all the

Equus Theatre Clywd

characters are dressed in whites or creams, as if their natural juices had been bleached out of them. Frank Grimes's fearful Martin may be the sophisticated analyst, but he is in awe of the savage sado-erotic faith that he is paid to cut out of Alan. In every respect this play is really his tragedy, but Grimes's tortured analyst gives in too easily to Oliver Ryan's compelling Alan. The pop-eyed teenager worships horses with the intensity of only the most religious and demented.

His mother, Lynne Verall's Dora, and his father, Robert Blythe's Frank, muddy the waters with their marital tug-of-war over who is to blame. But these seem like incidental squabbles until Manon Eames's febrile stable girl Hester precipitates the dangerous endgame when she finally forces Alan into the barn (his temple to Equus) for sex. The resultant drama is like watching a car crash replayed in slow motion; a nightmarish metaphor for a youth who blurs sex with the worst excesses of religion.

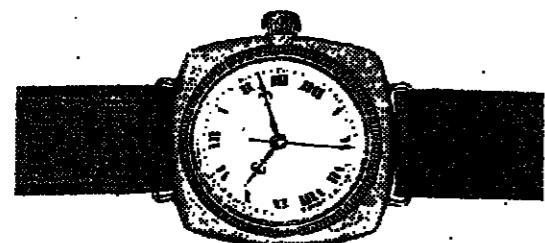
Despite the thriller-like quality of Hands's production, he never quite unlocks the Greek passions his production aspires to. Raw spirituality is an easy winner over rational middle age. Yet there are some sterling performances, particularly the (human) horses, choreographed by Jane Elliott, who creepily and brilliantly steal the show. I'd put a fiver on Alan Ragnall's supremely convincing *Nugget* to win Horse of the Year.

JAMES CHRISTOPHER

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POISONED CHALICE

A well-intentioned law that could shackle the press

The imminent Bill to toughen the law on data protection, which the Government is required under European Union law to put on the statute book before next October, will appear to most people as beneficial and necessary. The aim is to protect individuals' privacy by restricting the uses, including sale to third parties, to which companies and other bodies can put personal data banks.

Data mines, as they are known in the trade, can be a menace. People object with reason when the paying of a utility bill results in a barrage of unsolicited leaflets peddling unrelated products and services, or when one gift to a charity leads to hundreds of envelopes from others. More seriously, people worry that information about them can be circulated without their consent to credit agencies or potential employers. But this legislation has a grave defect; unless its drafting is changed, it would inhibit huge areas of normal journalistic activity and bring a blanket law of press censorship.

The existing 1984 law already places some restrictions on data users who must be registered, operate within the terms of their registration and observe eight principles designed to protect personal data from abuse. It can be an offence, for example, to use their databases to market new businesses — which has already created problems for expanding companies. The 1995 EU Data Protection Directive of 1995 — which Britain is bound to implement although it voted against it — not only makes these restrictions much tougher; it gives "data subjects", those about whom information is held, explicit rights of access and control.

With exceptions for such areas as national security, criminal investigations or taxation, government and other data users will have to obtain the individual's "unambiguous" consent to hold or use paper or computer records on them. Where people have not themselves supplied the information, they must be told of its existence and will then have the right to see, correct or block its disclosure or use. There is a total ban on collecting "special categories" of information such as somebody's political or religious beliefs, ethnic origins or sex life, unless the person concerned has given "explicit consent".

All this may sound totally unobjectionable. But *The Times* is by no means engaged in special pleading when it cautions against the law of unintended consequences. Like the law of privacy which the Government has rightly rejected, these rights could easily be abused by those with money and lawyers and something to hide to silence all press investigation of their activities.

Consider what this law would mean in practice. Under Article 7, reporters would have to tell somebody that he was being in-

vestigated — and obtain his consent to collecting the facts. Under Articles 10 and 11, they would be obliged to notify the person of his right to see what information they held; such a right would betray the confidentiality of sources, including whistle-blowers. And under Article 14, that person could obtain a legal injunction blocking its publication. This would amount to prior censorship.

It is not only investigative journalism that would become a legal minefield. A generally uncontroversial media service, the compiling of obituaries, could fall foul of the clause prohibiting the collection of information on opinions, beliefs and origins. And although EU governments are allowed under Article 9 to make exemptions to the law for journalism or literature, this is only so far as they consider "necessary to reconcile the right to privacy with the rules governing freedom of expression". Through the EU side-door, this would usher in the privacy law which the Blair Government has rightly rejected.

The first and laudable instinct of Lord Williams of Mostyn, the Home Office minister responsible, was to give the media a general exemption. But following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, a Government fearful of being seen to be soft on the press backed off. Home Office officials are now drafting exemptions for each article. It is imperative that exemptions are framed in the broadest of terms, that they entrench in all case a public interest defence, and that they remove all possibility of pre-publication "gagging" injunctions.

But even then, anything short of a blanket exemption can offer no more than the freedom to "publish and be damned", with the prospect of court battles to determine the admissibility, case by case, of a public interest defence. A better method would be that of Finland, which exempts the media under Article 9 from all restrictions on the unpublished material they hold on file. To prevent this data ending up in the wrong hands, the media must satisfy the data protection ombudsman that their internal data protection systems are secure. But because the need to protect sources is recognised, they do not have to disclose what information they store.

As with privacy legislation, the Government's first thoughts were its best. Tony Blair should weigh carefully the fear of Lord Wakeham, the chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, that this law "would destroy journalism" in this country. A blanket exemption might not be popular, but only because its purpose would not be well understood. Mr Blair should reflect that the alternative could be worse than unpopular. This Government's principled commitment to freedom of information is here subjected to a critical test.

SORRY NOW

Blair and Labour need to learn the right lessons

A honeymoon of such length and intensity was bound to end in acrimony. Tony Blair was right to face the cameras at Chequers yesterday and wise to start with an apology. His appearance was a recognition of the damage that the Ecclestone affair had done to his Government. He noted that, in the wider scheme of things, the future of Formula One was a modest issue. That is true but it does not make it irrelevant. The Profumo affair, Westlands and "cash for questions" were not at the centre of British public policy either. They all had an impact on the Prime Minister associated with them.

However, Mr Blair's apology was less than absolute. Indeed at times — when he declared himself "furious", "hurt" and "upset" — he appeared to demand contrition from others in return. The Prime Minister declined to say sorry for either the decision to take the money or the process that led to it. On the former, he is on reasonable ground, on the latter he is far less certain.

The meeting with Mr Ecclestone at Downing Street was inevitably going to raise eyebrows. This is not because the new ethical climate makes it impossible for major donors to meet ministers. If the existence and scale of Mr Ecclestone's support had been public knowledge, then far less concern would have been forthcoming.

The Prime Minister had few qualms in disowning his party's presentational failures. He conceded that the manner in which information had "dribbled out" had

spawned unnecessary suspicion. It is, though, only part of the story. The various strands of this saga have not only been released slowly and with reluctance but the content was incomplete and at times contradictory. This continues to be true despite the Prime Minister's efforts.

The means by which British politics is financed has certainly caused much concern over the past decade. In his interview yesterday and on our pages opposite, Mr Blair makes plain his preference for a radical overhaul of the system. Much of what he outlines will strike many people as reasonable. Sir Patrick Neill, though, is right to stress the importance of all-party agreements. An exclusive regime of state funding has attracted relatively little enthusiasm. A fixed limit on individual donations may prove difficult to administer. Some sort of overall ceiling on what parties may spend in the course of the election campaign might emerge as the option worth exploring.

Mr Blair has decided to lead from the front in the effort to put the Ecclestone affair behind him. If no further revelations surface soon, then he may succeed in doing so. It is important that the Prime Minister learns the appropriate lessons from this drama. These should centre on really fundamental issues about the way Downing Street interacts with the rest of Whitehall. They are not primarily about an unduly cynical press, a poor public relations strategy, or the precise structure of current party funding practice.

BUTLER POWER

Paul Burrell is the best man to select the Diana memorial

No man is a hero to his valet. No, nor no princess either, heroine to her butler. But butlers and valets are the unsung and offstage heroes. That is their function. They are among the select few to be admitted to the private reality behind the public masks of ceremony and razzmatazz. So the appointment of Paul Burrell to serve on the Diana Memorial Committee is a rare instance of life imitating art. For once the butler is being consulted officially rather than behind the scenes, Jeeves would have approved.

For ten years Mr Burrell was the butler and confidant of the late Princess of Wales. She described him as her rock and said, "He is the only man I can trust." He was the only outsider, not a member of her family, to attend her burial at Althorp. In recognition of his devotion, last week he was invested with the Royal Victorian Medal. Now he has been appointed to the committee of ten to

choose a permanent memorial for the Princess. Announcing that the committee was being set up, Tony Blair said that it would look at ways of "taking forward some of the causes she held dear".

But this is a problematic assignment. The committee will work with the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, which has received millions of pounds. In addition, the Government is going to hand over more than £2.5 million in VAT receipts earned from Elton John's top of all pops *Candle in the Wind* record. Ministers have received many thousands of letters suggesting how Diana should be commemorated. So whatever is decided is bound to disappoint many and be controversial to most.

In these circumstances of high emotion above stairs, the Government is following wise precedents of fact, folklore and fiction. When in doubt, consult the butler as the discreet insider who really knows.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9KN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Ecclestone refund and party sleaze

From Mr John Stott

Sir, Mr Bernie Ecclestone tells us, in his letter of November 14, that he made a donation to the Labour Party because he believed "Mr Blair to be a person of exceptional ability who, if free to act, would do an outstanding job for our country".

Surely he now sees that he is entitled to his money back. Every last penny.

Yours faithfully,
J. C. STOTT,
Blæk House, Copperhill, Stafford.
jcs@blæk.demon.co.uk
November 14.

From Mr John Warne

Sir, Would Mr Bernie Ecclestone and Mr Max Mosley have had the privilege of putting their case for special treatment personally to the Prime Minister on October 16 if he had not given the Labour Party £1 million or so earlier this year?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN WARNE,
16 Carlton Mews,
Wells, Somerset.
November 14.

From Mr Howard Leigh

Sir, The disclosure by Bernie Ecclestone of an annual personal tax bill of £27 million implies an income of some £68 million. Presumably all or most of that is deemed to be essentially from Formula One racing.

The account of his Formula One Promotions and Administration Ltd shows directors' remuneration of some £55 million. In Mr Ecclestone's special pleadings to the Prime Minister one would hope the point was made to him that the industry could survive happily if such huge sums were not extracted for personal benefit.

Yours faithfully,
HOWARD LEIGH
(Director),
Cavendish Corporate Finance Ltd,
12 Cavendish Place, W1.
November 14.

From Mr Denis Meehan

Sir, Your leader, "Disillusion day" (November 14), strikes me as grossly unfair. The Labour Party in opposition voluntarily adopted a procedure of disclosing the names of individuals and companies donating sums in excess of £5,000, a procedure which it carried over into government. This is in itself a powerful disincentive to corruption and influence-peddling.

The Conservative Party, by contrast, remains secretive about donors. To suggest equivalence of secrecy and sleaze between the two parties is simply not credible.

Yours sincerely,
DENIS MEEHAN,
238 Upper Richmond Road, SW15.
November 14.

From Mr John Urwin

Sir, By offering to return Bernie Ecclestone's donation the Labour Party has shown that it will put the country's exports and highly skilled engineering jobs ahead of party funding.

Giving Formula One time to find alternative sponsors shows that the party has a grasp of reality lamentably lacking amongst the chattering classes, who would be advised to move on to a more interesting story.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN URWIN (engineer),
1 Newlands Close,
Hitchin, Hertfordshire.
jn26@julip.pipex.com
November 14.

From Mr Roger Hicks

Sir, I, too, feel I have fared well under the current Government. I wonder whether Sir Patrick Neill would instruct the Treasury to repay to me the taxes I have contributed since the election, in order to avoid any allegations of sleaze.

Yours etc.
ROGER HICKS,
68 Deer Park Drive,
Arnold, Nottingham.
November 14.

From Mr Hugh Long

Sir, I suggest a new rival to the euro: the high-denomination b-note, with its unique distinction of being refundable.

Yours sincerely,
HUGH LONG,
67 Dartmouth Park Road, NW5.
November 15.

Fair enough?

From Mrs Mary Beard

Sir, My father, who was for many years an engineer and administrator with the South Indian railway, used to recount with great admiration the story of a local magistrate who had an enviable reputation for fairness. When asked how he had achieved this, the magistrate is said to have replied:

I always accepted the bribe offered from both sides, then I would consider the case on its merits and return the bribe to the side which I found against.

Yours faithfully,
MARY BEARD,
Dromard House,
Kesh, Co. Fermanagh.
November 12.

Nolan or Downey: whose rules apply to MPs' conduct?

From Professor Anthony King

Sir, The House of Commons will be debating on Monday the Standards and Privileges Committee's report on the Neil Hamilton affair. As a member of the former Nolan committee I must say there seems to be considerable confusion about the original Nolan recommendations and the procedure subsequently adopted by the House committee.

The Nolan committee's report in 1995 envisaged a three-stage process when accusations of misconduct were brought against MPs. The independent Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards would first investigate and decide whether there was a case to answer. If he concluded there was, it would be heard by a special sub-committee of the Standards and Privileges Committee. If the sub-committee found against the member, he or she would appeal to the full committee (and ultimately to the House).

No one would be on trial; but the rough analogy the Nolan committee had in mind was Crown Prosecution Service, court of first instance, appeal court.

The Commons in 1995 adopted the broad Nolan approach, but the Standards and Privileges Committee in the last Parliament decided against setting up a special sub-committee. Instead, in the case of Mr Hamilton

and the 24 other MPs, it decided that the Parliamentary Commissioner should function on the rough judicial analogy, as both investigating magistrate and court of first instance.

Sir Gordon Downey's terms of reference were precise. He was asked to inquire into allegations of misconduct against Mr Hamilton and others "with a view to establishing whether there had been any breach of House of Commons rules, in the letter or in the spirit". The House committee agreed to follow the procedures Sir Gordon

subsequently concluded that there had indeed been a breach of the rules. So far as I can make out, he did not exceed the brief given to him by the committee in the old House and has not, at any rate publicly, been accused of so doing; nor is it suggested that there was any material defect in the procedure he followed.

Given what has happened since, it seems to me, speaking only for myself, nor for the members of what is now the Neil committee, that the House and the Standards and Privileges Committee need to decide how they want to operate in future. They can either revert to the procedures originally envisaged by Nolan (and be prepared on occasion to conduct lengthy and detailed investigations), or they can regularise the position they have adopted in the Hamilton

case and others, that the Parliamentary Commissioner conducts a detailed investigation and comes to firm conclusions.

In the latter case, the committee would presumably exercise a broadly "judicial review" function and reject the Parliamentary Commissioner's report only if his procedures had been seriously flawed or his findings manifestly unsafe and unsatisfactory.

The committee in the Hamilton case has, in effect, followed the latter of the two procedures. It has clearly concluded that Sir Gordon Downey's procedures were not seriously flawed and his findings not unsafe and unsatisfactory. But for some reason it has been reluctant to say in so many words that it has performed this kind of judicial review function — an omission that leaves it and the commissioner in an ambiguous and unsatisfactory factory position.

Certainly the committee seems to hold that view. As it says in its report, it now needs "to assess its own role in relation to inquiries conducted by the commissioner". In my view, it should undertake that assessment as a matter of urgency.

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY KING,
The Mill House, Middle Green,
Wakes Colne, Colchester, Essex.
November 14.

Contacts with Iraq

From the Director-General of the International School of Geneva

Sir, If the British Government still has a policy towards Iraq I hope those who are responsible for it will have read Simon Jenkins's excellent article of November 12, "Exploding the myth" (letters, November 14).

I have seen the effects in Baghdad of economic sanctions and of so-called clinical strikes. Jenkins is right to conclude that neither can be justified on moral or pragmatic grounds.

His "contact strategy" offers a radical alternative, which is why this school continues to maintain contact, despite all the logistical difficulties, with Baghdad International School, set up by the United Nations in the early Eighties.

It is a pity that a new Foreign Secretary has failed to reflect on the psychology of isolation and missed the opportunity to rethink a discredited policy that has achieved exactly the opposite effect of that intended.

Yours faithfully,
GEORGE WALKER,
Director-General,
The International School of Geneva,
1208 Geneva.
November 14.

I bank, therefore ...

From Mr Michael Pollard

Sir, Mrs Irene Draper (letter, November 5; see also letters, November 8) should follow the example of a dear family friend (now long departed) who, on reaching a certain age, received a letter requiring "proof of existence" from her insurance company.

Her response was that she had no intention of wasting people's time asking for letters proving her continued existence, but if she felt her letter was insufficient proof and decided to stop paying her annuity she would have pleasure in meeting them in court over the matter.

She had no further problem.

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL POLLARD,
2 Victoria Park Road, Exeter, Devon.
November 8.

From Mr Leonard Harrington

Sir, Some years ago, when living abroad, a friend had his car stolen. When the insurance company asked could he prove the vehicle was stolen he sent them a photograph of his empty garage.

Yours faithfully,
LEONARD HARRINGTON,
38 Loveface Road, Surbiton, Surrey.
November 15.

From Mr W. D. Cormie

Sir, It is for Mrs Draper's bankers to furnish proof of her existence. After all, it is they who have her money.

Yours faithfully,
W. D. CORMIE,
Dix's, Black Hill,
Lindfield, West Sussex.

Coping with Christmas

From Mr R. F. Mountjoy

Sir, Surely the appropriate date for a day-long seminar for people who can't cope with Christmas ("Cool Yule tips", in brief



COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE November 15: The Prince Edward, Trustee, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, this evening gave a dinner for the Founder Members of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Charter for Business on board *HMY Britannia*, Pool of London.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE November 16: The Prince Edward, President, this evening attended the Twenty First Anniversary Gala performance given by the National Youth Music Theatre at the Palace Theatre, London W1.

KENSINGTON PALACE November 16: The Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon this evening attended "Stars of the Night", a Gala of Dance, at Her Majesty's Theatre, London W1, to celebrate the amalgamation of the Royal Academy of Dancing and the Benesh Institute.

Dinner

Stoneyhurst Association

Sir Philip Ottaway was the principal guest at the annual dinner of the Stoneyhurst Association, held on Saturday at Beaumont, Old Windsor. Mr Julian Bell presided. Mr A.J.F. Ayward, Headmaster of Stoneyhurst College, also spoke.

Today's royal engagements

The Duke of Edinburgh, trustee, will attend a meeting of the council and a function at the Royal House, Victoria Palace, at 10.30 am. The RAF Museum will attend a 25th anniversary dinner, Hendon, at 7.15.

The Prince of Wales, president, Royal Shakespeare Company, will attend the annual meeting of the court of governors, Royal Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon, at 2.00.

The Duke of Gloucester, Grand Prior of the Order, will be accompanied by the Duchess of Gloucester, will attend a dinner of *HMY Britannia* in the Pool of London, W4.

The Duke of Kent will visit the Integrated Care Centre, Victoria Infirmary, Northwich, at 11.35; will open the teaching and sixth-form centre, Sandbach School, Crewe Road, at 12.45.

British Mountaineering Council, will visit the British Mountaineering Council, will attend a dinner of the Alpine Club, Crewe, at 7.15; and as patron, Anglo-Jordanian Society, will attend the biennial dinner, Roof Gardens, Kensington High Street, W8, at 7.45.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Sieur de la Vérendrye, explorer and fur trader, Trois-Rivières, Québec, 1685; Louis XVIII, King of France, 1795-1844; Versailles, 1755; August Möbius, astronomer, Schulpforta, Germany, 1790; Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, 1887; Queen Astrid, Queen of King Baudouin III of Belgium, Stockholm, 1902; Rock Hudson, actor, Winnetka, Illinois, 1925.

DEATHS: Queen Mary I (Mary Tudor), reigned 1553-58, London, 1558; Norman Shaw, architect, London, 1912; Auguste Rodin, sculptor, Meudon, France, 1917; Eric Gill, artist, sculptor and typographer, Hatchet, Uxbridge, 1940.

The Suez Canal was formally opened, 1869.

The first women to graduate in Britain received their Bachelor of Arts degrees from London University, 1880.

Nature notes

Jays are busy burying acorns in the oak woods. They often hide several thousand acorns in this way and retrieve them for food throughout the winter. One hears their harsh, screaming calls in the distance, but they are wary birds and are generally on the wing by the time one sees them. Green woodpecker families have broken up and young and old are leading solitary lives. They often make a loud burst of calls as they land on a tree trunk, but the mellow, laughing song will not be heard again until February. Red-breasted mergansers from Iceland are swelling the num-

bers along the coast: the drakes have green heads, the females red heads, each with a ragged crest at the back. There is a last blaze of brilliant orange and gold on the beech trees.

Most sycamore leaves are a luminous yellow, but they are falling fast. After the rain, much of the bracken is purple and black.

Scarlet pimpernel is still flowering where the stubble has not been ploughed in. While the weather stays mild, pipistrelle bats continue to come out and pursue night-flying beetles, but they will hibernate under tiles and behind drainpipes when it gets frosty. DJM

The jay

where the stubble has not been ploughed in. While the weather stays mild, pipistrelle bats continue to come out and pursue night-flying beetles, but they will hibernate under tiles and behind drainpipes when it gets frosty. DJM

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

We are not judges, and you will not be judged. For as you judge others so will you be judged, and when you have been judged out to others will be dealt with you. Matthew 7: 1, 2.

BIRTHS

ASKY-WOOD - On 9th November, to Carol and Peter, at St. Paul's Hospital, Bognor. - On 7th November 1997, in New York, to Clare (née Yead) and Michael, a son, Matthew, 2 lbs 12 oz. CATCHETT - On November 9th at The Portland Hospital, to Sophie (née Malins) and Philip, a son, Christopher, 7 lbs 2 oz.

CLOTHESY - On November 8th to Odile (née Hutchinson) and Noel, a son, Stephen, 7 lbs 11 oz. FORRESTER - On November 13th in New York, to Rebecca (née Freeman) and Robert, a son, Christopher, and Catherine, a sister, for Claudia. HUTCHESON - See Clothesy. LOVETT - On 12th November 1997 to Emily and Clive two precious gifts, a son Christopher, 7 lbs 11 oz, and a daughter, Bethany Eve, Sarah.

MARRIAGES

POTTER:DAYNES - Lynn Suzanne Daynes and Jeremy Christopher Potter were married in Miami USA on 17th September 1997.

DEATHS

SAUN - Alison Windiford died peacefully at Frances Alice Hospital, London, on 12th November. She will be much missed by her many friends and family. A memorial service at Mortlake Crematorium on Thursday November 20th at 12 noon. In memory of Alison, a donation to the Royal Free Hospital, London NW3.

BALL - Peter's parents, born 1920 April 1943, died in November 1997. A son, Michael, and a daughter, Barbara, died in November 1997. Peter's illness bravely borne. Much loved and sadly missed by his wife, Barbara, and many more family and friends in England and Ireland. Rest in peace.

MARY - Parish Church, Rawtenstall, Lancs, at 12 noon on Thursday November 13th. Services only by request, but donations welcome. A local funeral director, Mr. Martin, 42, of 106a, Lowergate, Manchester, via the funeral directors, F. Hamer Ltd, 113a, Lowergate, Bury, BB4 1YE (tel. 01706 215721).

CHAMPION - Rev. Dr. L.G. Pritchard, former Rector of St. Michael's Baptist College, one-time President of the Baptist Union and of the Baptist Federal Council. On 8th November 1997 aged 90. A Thanksgiving service will be held in the St. Michael's Baptist Church, Brixton at 2.30 pm on December 10th. Donations welcome to the St. Michael's Fund, 106a Lowergate, Manchester, via the funeral directors, F. Hamer Ltd, 113a, Lowergate, Bury, BB4 1YE (tel. 01706 215721).

COOK - Arnold. Suddenly at Southampton General Hospital on November 13th. Service at Winchester Cathedral on Friday November 14th at 12.15 pm, followed by private cremation. No flowers, donations to Wessel Northeast.



Sir Colin Davis, left, principal conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra, with Alexander Barantschik, orchestra leader, during rehearsals at the Barbican Centre in London yesterday for the launch last night of the LSO's 1997 Sibelius Cycle, which is part of the Barbican's Välo (light) Festival of Finnish culture

Scottish Piping Society of London

Good tunes despite slight drone troubles

By ANGUS NICOL

THE Scottish Piping Society of London's annual competition always draws a good number of pipers from Scotland, and several from abroad. The Argylshire Gathering and the Northern Gathering each take two days to stage some dozen competitions. London somehow manages to fit nine into one day without undue strain, which is no mean feat.

Though perhaps not a vintage year for piping-related competitions, there were some good tunes to be heard. However, there were one or two unfortunate and unexpected breakdowns, due to drone troubles and the like. At least one of these ruined what had been an excellent tune up to that point.

The Bratich Gorm is open to holders of the Highland Society of London's Gold Medal, won at Oban or Inverness, or previous winners of the Open Pibrochaidh. The Bratich is a blue banner to be hung from the great drone of the pipe, and was originally presented by Dr Calum MacCrimmon. This year it was won by Mike Cusack, from Texas, with a performance of *The Lament for the Children*. The second prize, the Donald MacKay Challenge Trophy, stayed in England: it was won by Pipe-Major Iain Macey with *The Blue Ribbon*. The other three prizes went back to Scotland.

The Open Pibrochaidh with the William Gillick Cup was won by John Angus Smith. He comes from a family of pipers originally from South Uist, who have been settled near London for a generation now. He gave an excellent performance of *The End of the Great Bridge*.

the Camerons' gathering tune, though also attributed to Clan MacCall, William Morrison played *Lachlan MacNeill Campbell of Kinlochard's Fancy* to take the second prize, the Robertson Trophy. In third place, Pipe-Major Iain Macey played *The Bells of Perth*.

The Highland Club Pibrochaidh competition was originally intended for pipers who wished to retain amateur status. Now amateurs and professionals enter, though there are still no money prizes. Kenneth MacBride won the Highland Club trophy playing *The Massacre of Glencoe*. The second prize is the R.G. Lawrie Ram's Horn Snuff Muff: this was won by Andrew Wright, who played *The Mac Dougalls' Gathering*. The third prize, a belt buckle, was won by Bernard Bouhadana, playing *The Lament for the Children*.

The principal *coit eag* event is the march, strathspey and reel competition for the London Medallion. Four tunes of each kind are submitted, and the competitor has to play one of each twice through. The winner was James Morrison, who also received the John MacFadyen Memorial Quaich. The Strachan Cup event is open to those not eligible to compete for the medallion. This was won by Hervé Le Floch from Brittany. Another competition originally for amateurs is the march, strathspey and reel for the Highland Society of London's Targe, which was won by Mike Cusack.

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The final competition was the Gaelic air and jig for the Highlands and Islands Challenge Quaich, for pipers under 18. This was won by Bernard Bouhadana. The Championship Prize is awarded to the competitor who has gained the most points in the Bratich Gorm, the Open Pibrochaidh, London Medallion, and Jigs, and who has competed in all four events. This was won by Mike Cusack.

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OBITUARIES

GEORGES MARCHAIS

Georges Marchais, Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, 1972-94, died yesterday aged 71. He was born on June 7, 1920.

Georges Marchais had the unenviable fate of leading the French Communists during a period of steady decline in their popular support. In his efforts to combat the growing ascendancy of the Socialists, he conducted policy through a series of U-turns which bewildered his own rank-and-file and drew derision from his critics. First, in 1972, he formed an alliance with the Socialist Party (PS), but then broke with it in 1977-78 and moved the Communist Party (PCF) back into isolation.

When the Socialists won power in 1981, he accepted PCF participation in their Government, while surreptitiously still working to undermine them: then, in 1984 he pulled the party out of the Government. When Mikhail Gorbachev took power in Moscow, Marchais paid lip-service to perestroika but did nothing to apply it within PCF ranks. Whereas in the 1970s he had sometimes appeared as a "liberal" wishing to democratise the party, he later stuck to a hard conservative position and rejected all attempts at reform. This bluff proletarian showed in public an almost comical pugnacity, which helped to make him into a national television star. But though a wily political opera-

tor, he lacked either intellectual gifts or any real statesman-like vision.

Marchais was born in Normandy, at La Roquette near Falaise; his father was a quarryman and his mother from a Roman Catholic peasant family. He did poorly at school, where he is said to have developed an inferiority complex that was to mark him for life. His early adult years remain cloaked in mystery. He certainly never joined the Resistance, and in 1942 he went to work as an aircraft mechanic at a Messerschmidt plant near Augsburg. There is some evidence that he went voluntarily — far from being deported, as was later claimed — and his political enemies made much of this distinctly unheroic war record.

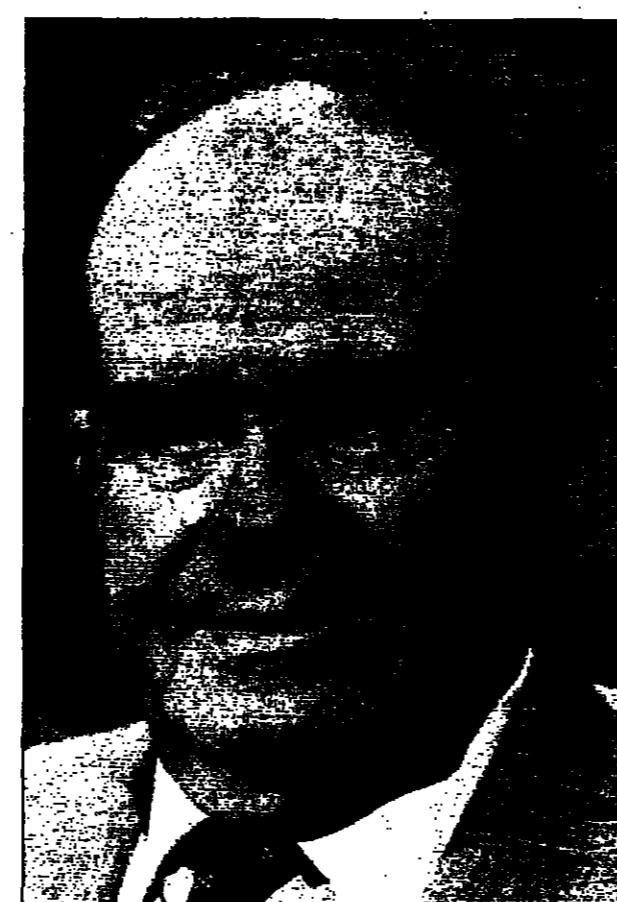
The Joint Programme worked smoothly for a while, until the Communists realised that it was benefiting the Socialists more than themselves. So in 1977, urged on by the Stalinists in his ranks, Marchais made the boldest of his U-turns: he virtually broke off the alliance. His motives? Above all he was afraid of the PCF entering a Government of the Left as the weaker partner, and of it being obliged to acquiesce in "social democratic" policies. The result of the break was that the Left lost the 1978 elections, which hitherto it had seemed set to win.

This caused disarray among those of the party rank-and-file who felt that their leaders had robbed them of victory. Some "dissident" liberals resigned in disgust; or they were pushed out by Marchais, who now led the party firmly back into its "ghetto" of domestic isolation and rebuilt his bridges with the Soviet Union. On a visit to

gramme of alliance with the then still fragile PS, believing that the PCF could safely dominate it. He pledged a new, fully democratic party that would accept the principle of alternation of power. He formed close links with the Italian Communist leader Enrico Berlinguer, thus launching the vogue for a "Euro-Communism" separate from Moscow. He grew openly critical of the Soviet Union on such issues as human rights, and in 1976 presided over a PCF Congress that jettisoned the key Marxist concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat".

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Moscow in January 1980 he publicly backed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. At home, he repeatedly sniped at the Socialists under Mitterrand, accusing them of shifting to the right.

He pursued this theme as PCF candidate in the presidential election campaign of April

1981. But it rebounded against him. He polled a mere 1.54 per cent, much the lowest Communist score since the war — a clear sign that his erratic tactics were alienating part of his own electorate.

After Mitterrand formed his Socialist Government, Marchais and his colleagues felt that

they had little choice but to accept his offer of PCF posts in it. But they remained wary of critical partners and in 1984 they withdrew from it, angered by Mitterrand's policy shifts towards the centre. Marchais declared that he had made a mistake in ever trusting the Socialists.

After this, he held the party to a hard Stalinist line, and managed to thwart all efforts by Charles Fiterman, Pierre Juquin and other *réformateurs* to introduce a more open, modern and democratic structure, on the Italian Communist model. The result was a continued erosion of PCF fortunes: in the 1988 general election it polled only 11 per cent, and by 1990 its support had fallen below 10 per cent. For this Marchais was continually criticised within his own ranks, and repeated attempts were made to oust him, but they failed.

When communism was overthrown in Eastern Europe in 1989-90, Marchais tried artfully to parade as a champion of reform: "I feel very close to Gorbachev," he said in January 1990, and he claimed that he had been "duped" by the hardline Communist leaders in the East. But his failure to act on these lessons lost him yet more credibility. His political cynicism had never inspired confidence: now it did so less than ever.

And yet, amazingly, in December 1990 he was unanimously re-elected party leader. He had managed to surround himself with loyal apprentices, his grip on the party

machine was tight, and he was always an astute manipulator. This enabled him to overcome and even stifle dissent. He himself had no clear ideology, save an instinct for his own survival, which he equated with that of the party. He was, it is true, a staunch French patriot, with nationalistic views on such matters as defence. But he saw no incompatibility between this and his belief that the PCF, domestically isolated, had need of the firm support of Moscow.

After 1981 he was seemingly reconciled to the view that the PCF's own electoral decline was irreversible, that power would not come via the ballot box, and that therefore the best strategy was to consolidate a secure, if narrow, working-class base and to wait for eventual victory via the steady global expansion of the Soviet Union and the slow but sure death of capitalism.

Marchais' personality did not make him ideally suited to leading the PCF during this difficult period. In public he had a show-off, histrionic manner, especially in TV debates, where he would fly into feigned rages and parade brasher-untruths. This provocative spectacle won him high TV ratings — higher even than soccer matches. But it also made him faintly ridiculous. With his square jaw, bushy eyebrows and staring eyes, he had the air of a man with a knife between his teeth.

But behind this ebullient facade he was really a timid individual, frequently feeling under threat and thus reacting

LADY TRYON

Lady Tryon, society hostess and dress designer, died from septicemia in hospital in London on November 15 aged 49. She was born in Melbourne on January 3, 1948.

A COLOURFUL ornament to English society for more than two decades, Dale "Kanga" Tryon was a woman of great spirit and determination. She needed — and showed — those qualities in extra measure in the last years of her life, as a succession of illnesses and misfortunes turned her from a darling of the gossip columns into an object of almost macabre fascination. Her private battles of the 1990s — first with a recurrence of the spina bifida she had suffered as a child; then with uterine cancer; then with depression; then with paralysis after a fall — were all bravely fought in the full glare of media attention.

The public interest was explained by her role as a longstanding friend and confidante of the Prince of Wales, who was widely and frequently quoted as having called her "the only woman who really understands me". It was he who gave her the nickname Kanga — a name which stuck and which was later to provide the label for her dress collection — and after her marriage to Lord Tryon, one of his oldest friends, he became the godfather to their first son.

An accomplished hostess, Lady Tryon managed for many years to combine a hectic social life in London and a Wiltshire with a career as a fashion designer and a mother of four. She was also active on the charity circuit, serving for a time as vice-chairman of the mental health charity SANE. Prince Charles once played in a polo match to help her to raise funds.

Dale Elizabeth Harper, as she was before her marriage, was born with a mild form of spina bifida and was unable to walk until she was nine. She spent three years in hospital, and her father, a wealthy Australian publisher, built a special bed for her so that she could be wheeled around.

Resolutely courageous even from an early age, by the time

she was ten she had thrown away her calipers and crutches and was walking unaided — even riding horses. She was, however, to suffer from back pain all her life, and in later years would have a number of operations to rebuild her spine.

She first met Prince Charles at a teenage dance in Melbourne, while he was a temporary pupil at the Geelong Grammar School in 1966. She was not to meet him again until she came to England to be "finished" in the early 1970s. She worked for a time in London as a PR for the Qantas airline and as an assistant at *Woman's Weekly* magazine.

While in London, she was introduced to one of Prince Charles' friends, Anthony Tryon. A merchant banker almost ten years her senior, son of the Keeper of the Privy Purse and himself a former page of honour to the Queen, he was known by his friends as "Lord Ummm" for the way he would finish his sentences. When Dale Harper returned to Australia, he followed and asked for her hand.

They were married in 1973 at the Chapel Royal, St James's Palace. Their first child, a daughter, was born the year after their marriage. A son, whose godfather was the Prince of Wales, followed two years later. Twins were born at the end of the decade.

The family retained a base in London, but the children were brought up in a fairly modest house on the 2,000-acre Tryon estate at Great Durnford in Wiltshire. Later, though in small part to Lady Tryon's enterprise, they were able to move back into the ancestral home, a large Queen Anne manor house which had had to be let out as a girls' school.

Lord Tryon worked for the merchant bank Lazard's. In the early 1980s Lady Tryon, not content with the role of weekend wife in the country, used £2,000 of her savings to open a London dress shop, which she called Kanga in Beauchamp Place, off Knightsbridge. Some of the dresses she stocked — one-size, non-crushable, drip-dry, flouncy creations — were inspired by her own busy life-



style, which involved frequent flights to visit her family in Australia. Selling what Lady Tryon called "outfits for real figures, not six-foot models", the shop was a success, and in 1985 a design label was launched, also called Kanga.

What had started as a hobby turned into a thriving international business, with an annual turnover of more

than £1 million. Despite often excruciating back pain, Lady Tryon found herself travelling constantly between Hong Kong and Italy and New York, visiting other branches of her company.

She also developed a lucrative sideline, buying, converting and selling London property. Then, after her husband had lost his job as a director of Lazard's, she be-

came the chief financial support of her family.

Lady Tryon remained close to Prince Charles throughout his bachelor days, and was even said to have vetted his girlfriends, assessing their suitability as potential royal brides. A shared passion for fly-fishing continued to provide a link after the Prince's marriage in 1981, and the Princess of Wales was among Lady Tryon's fashionable customers.

Lady Tryon, not normally reticent, remained notably loyal and discreet when the strains in the royal marriage began to become known. There were those, however, who thought that she resented the prominence of Camilla Parker Bowles in Prince Charles' life, particularly after his divorce, and who accused her of making too much of her own closeness to the Prince, which belonged largely to the past.

By then, however, she had more serious troubles than gossip to contend with. In 1992 she went through several gruelling operations to rebuild the top of her spine with cow bones. Shortly afterwards it was discovered that she had uterine cancer which had spread to her kidneys. She fought courageously and was eventually given the all-clear.

In 1993, however, she was admitted to Farm Place, a private rehabilitation clinic near Dorking, apparently to recuperate from exhaustion and depression. There she suffered a fall from an upper window which left her with a broken back and fractured skull; she was subsequently confined to a wheelchair.

In June of this year she was detained for 28 days under the Mental Health Act and in July Lord Tryon applied for a High Court order banning her from the family estate. In September he was granted a decree nisi. The decree absolute hearing had been deferred at the time of Lady Tryon's death, which came after a skin graft operation, reportedly to repair bed sores sustained during a recent bout of alternative therapy in India.

Lord Tryon survives her with their two sons and two daughters.

DEVASTATION IN PAKISTAN

From Arnold Zeitlin

Over Bhola Island, Pakistan, Nov 16. The devastation is virtually complete in the southern half of this battered island which took the full impact of last week's cyclone and tidal waves which, according to estimates, swept hundreds of thousands of people to their deaths. The relief commission in Dacca said today that according to an official confirmed count 32,871 people died as a result of the storm. But other officials made mention of a death toll of between 300,000 and 500,000.

Most bodies have been buried in mass graves. Survivors spotted from the air in the 800 sq. mile area hardest hit wandered on high ground above the water which still covered much of the flat land. Blood from crushed cattle stained the fields where their carcasses were flung. The survivors, having buried most of the dead themselves in an area where relief is still scarce, were seen dragging huge bloated cattle carcasses to

Richard Hall, journalist, died on November 14 aged 72. He was born on July 22, 1925.

IN THE days when *The Observer*, under its Editor David Astor, led the world in its coverage of foreign affairs, Dick Hall was one of its best correspondents. His territory was Africa, and he reported on it with knowledge, insight and passion.

A close friend of Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia, he launched a newspaper there in the late 1950s, and was the first Editor of the *Times of Zambia* after independence. He covered the trouble spots of Africa, and prided himself on a number of notable scoops. He reported the vicious colonial war in the Congo in the early 1960s, and was there when Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary-General of the United Nations, was killed in an air crash in 1961. He was a passionate protagonist of the Biafrans, and was the last correspondent to leave before their fight for independence was lost. He drew on these experiences and his unbeatable network of contacts to write several books, and to launch an influential newsletter, *Africa Analysis*.

Richard Hall was born in Margate, where his father made a shabby living running boat-trips for holidaymakers before emigrating to Australia when the boy was three, and shortly afterwards abandoning both him and his mother. Hall's early years were spent on Bondi Beach, but when he was eight he and his mother, a strong and resourceful woman, returned to England.

Educated at Hastings Grammar School, he began his career on the *Evening Argus* in Sussex where he earned 7s 6d a week with 2s 6d bicycle allowance. He joined the Navy and did war service as a decoder in the Mediterranean, damaging his eyesight in the process. It was during this time that he met his first wife, Barbara Taylor, a Wren from Derbyshire, who returned to England.

In 1957 political pressures forced him to leave Zambia, and he returned to Britain to work for *The Observer*, where he stayed for 19 years as a foreign correspondent, covering not only African but Commonwealth news with distinction and courage. Hall had always asserted that during his time in Zambia, Rowland had never interfered with

and Anthony Sampson. Later he joined the *Daily Mail*, where he worked with Derek Ingram, but found domestic reporting restricting.

Having a strong entrepreneurial streak, and a spirit of adventure, he went out to Northern Rhodesia in 1958, where he ran some house magazines for the copper mines, before launching the *Central African Mail*, with help from David Astor who supplied a printing press. The paper was taken over after independence, but Hall, who by now was friendly with Kenneth Kaunda, became the Editor of the *Times of Zambia*. It was there that he came into contact with Tiny Rowland, who owned the paper.

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He leaves his widow and the five sons of his first marriage.

ON THIS DAY

November 17, 1970

Massacre in East Pakistan

A combination of cyclone and 20ft tidal waves swept peasants in East Pakistan to their deaths by the scores of thousands

from the aircraft it was possible to smell the odour of death, but the pilot said the situation had improved on that of two days ago when the smell almost made pilots vomit and then take sleeping pills after their flights over the area.

Water and wind had crushed an area in which Bengali farmers lived, clustered in tree-shaded communities with a density of 600 to a square mile. Most home sites remained, but corrugated iron roofs had fallen on the ground. The land is perfectly flat, much of it already dyed to prevent the sea from overrunning it. Nothing was seen which could have blocked the 20ft tidal waves. There was no place anyone could have sought shelter. A whole village has disappeared as if sucked up by a huge vacuum cleaner, leaving only muddy outlines of house foundations. The enormous force of wind and water was seen clearly on a tiny island between Hati and Bhola, where a cargo ship of 500 tons had been raised from sea and set upright on the shore 50 yards inland. No living person was seen on board.

Appointments
The Rev Richard Bending, Vicar, Buckden (Ely); to be Priest-in-Charge, Hail Weston (same diocese).
The Rev Elisabeth Boughton, formerly Chaplain, St Catherine's School, Bramley (Guildford); to be NSM Assistant Curate, Reigate St Mary (same diocese).
The Rev Adele Cheate, with permission to officiate (Hereford); to be NSM Curate, Burghill and Siston (Gloucester).
The Rev Richard Cooper, Vicar, Athelborough w Brougham and Reculver (Ripon); to be Honorary Canon of Ripon Cathedral.
The Rev Andrew Duff, Team Vicar, Prestwood w St Andrew, Bracknell Team (Oxford); to be Chaplain to the Forces.
The Rev Philip Dykes, formerly Curate-in-Charge, Bishop Andrew, St Helen (Winchester); to be Team Vicar, Canterbury St Paul (Guildford).
The Rev Brian Gillier, formerly Rector, Kingstone w Clehonge, Eaton Bishop, Alesmore and Thruxton (Hereford); to be Vicar.

Church news

The Rev Stephen Roberts, Vicar, Cambewell St George, and Warden, Trinity College Centre (Southwark); to be Rector of Cambewell (same diocese).
The Rev Graham Smith, Rector, Ross Team (Ripon); to be also Honorary Canon of Ripon Cathedral.
The Rev Anne Stratford, NSM, Oswestry (Lichfield); to be Priest-in-Charge, Ford, and Alberbury w Carleton (Hereford).
The Rev Peter Swain, Priest-in-Charge, Bromfield, Waverton and Westmington, and Rural Dean of Solway (Carlisle); to be Team Rector, Leominster (Hereford).
The Rev Peter Swales, Priest-in-Charge, Horsley (Derby); to be also Rural Dean of Hereford (same diocese).
The Rev Alan Taylor, Vicar, Leeds St Asaph (Ripon); to be also Honorary Canon of Ripon Cathedral.
The Rev Sally Vandyc, Assistant Curate, Caversham and Maple-durham (Oxford); to be Priest-in-Charge, Finchampstead St James (same diocese).

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THE TIMES TODAY

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17 1997

NEWS

Blair promises tough funding rules

■ Tony Blair today follows up a public apology for his handling of the Formula One debacle with the promise of a swift shake-up of the political funding system designed to give Britain a "healthier democracy".

After going on television to "take full responsibility" Mr Blair today backs national limits on amounts spent by the parties, "modest" ceilings on individual and company donations, and the publication of the names of donors and the amounts they give..... Pages 1, 2, 22

Murdered girl found in field

■ A father found his 14-year-old daughter murdered in a field after she failed to return from walking a neighbour's dog. Kate Bushell had been killed with a sharp instrument, probably a knife, and may have been sexually assaulted..... Pages 1, 3

Hope for nurse

Deborah Parry, the nurse facing beheading for murder in Saudi Arabia, had her life spared when the brother of her victim told a court he was waiving his right to the death penalty..... Page 1

Yeltsin peace bid

President Yeltsin has promised to intervene in the confrontation between the UN and Iraq over weapons..... Pages 1, 12, 13

Royal Train doomed

The Royal Train could be scrapped as part of a radical reform of the monarchy. The train was already under threat from MPs after it was shown that it had cost taxpayers £12.3 million in five years..... Page 5

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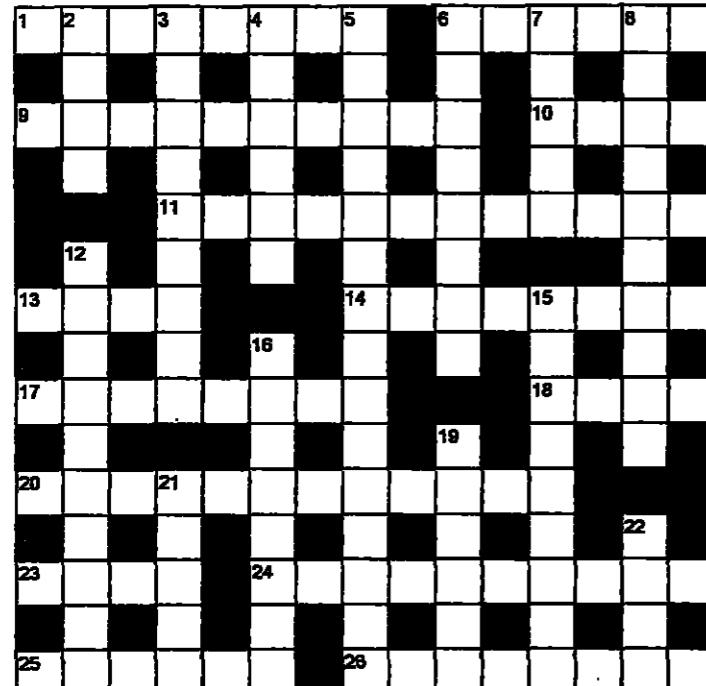
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■ The battle lines are being drawn for fresh hostilities at Pegasus Bridge, the first place liberated on D-Day. French authorities have now agreed to build a museum but their decision is likely to rekindle an acrimonious campaign over the site and could mean that shortly there will be rival museums pitching for the attention of tourists..... Page 1

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 1 Pices? Actually, they're in a different class (3).
 6 Arrive out East with German to hand over (6).
 9 Terribly poor sitcom, the type he prepares (10).
 10 Military band elite troops found hard to join (4).
 11 Former PM, with hesitation, introducing fellow from county (12).
 13 Solicitor's request secures parking by meadow (4).
 14 Ample notes on script (8).
 17 Standards of service king required in American agents (3).
 18 Long periods in Westgate-on-Sea (4).
 20 Fastener provided by fanatical lepidopterist? (9,3).

The solution of Saturday's Prize Puzzle No 20,638 will appear next Saturday. The five winners will each receive a £20 book token.

The winners of Prize Crossword No 20,632 are: R F Lambert, Harrogate, N York; S Young, Winchester, Hants; M R Prior, Didcot, Oxon; A Dunlop, King's Lynn, Norfolk; F Light, Porthcawl, Mid Glam.

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Christine Hugo with two of her vintage teddies at the London Antique Toy Fair in Kensington Town Hall yesterday

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Sampras takes his fourth ATP world championship
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Woodward's brave new England fluff their opening lines
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Lynne Truss on why the Irish are not bitter in defeat
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A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN

Australia put Britain to flight at Elland Road
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TIMES SPORT

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17 1997

England demand to be ranked with best

BY OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

AS THE qualifying competition entered its eleventh hour last night, and the composition of next summer's World Cup finals grew close to completion, Glenn Hoddle called for Fifa, football's world governing body, to recognise the importance of its own world rankings before it decides whether to make England one of the top eight seeds for the tournament in France.

As Japan, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Belgium and Italy celebrated their inclusion in the 32-nation jamboree, and Ireland mourned their play-off elimination, the England coach was fretting over his side's chances of avoiding the giants of the game in the finals group stages.

If Fifa persists with the seeding system it used to determine the leading teams at the start of the 1990 and 1994 World Cups, and calculates it on results in the previous three tournaments, England would be excluded from the top eight seeds because of their failure to qualify for the last competition four years ago.

On that basis, England would

Ireland fall short
Sweeping changes
Merson shines
Fulham coast through
Results and tables

lose out to teams such as Italy, Argentina, Holland and Belgium in the quest for top seedings. They would fall into the second rank and face the prospect of being matched with favourites for the tournament, such as Brazil and France, when the draw is made in Marseilles on December 4. Two teams from each of the eight groups of four will qualify for the last 16 of the tournament, which is the beginning of the knock-out stages.

If, however, Fifa uses its world rankings to pick the top seeds, possibly in combination with results from previous World Cups, then England's chances of making the top eight would improve dramatically. Hoddle has lost only two of his 14 matches in charge – to Italy and Brazil – and that record has propelled England to seventh.

Argentina, who are rusting with Colombia to be England's next opponents on February 11 at Wembley, are ranked only thirteenth in that list, France are fourteenth, Italy sixteenth and Belgium 48th. It hardly seems fair that England should have qualified by coming top of a group that included Italy, only to be seeded below them.

Hoddle, of course, was circum-

pect when asked after England's 2-0 victory over Cameroon at Wembley on Saturday whether he thought the system needed revision. But he made it clear that it would be irrational if the governing body's own world rankings were ignored when the decision was made.

"If you are going to have world rankings," Hoddle said, "they have got to have some credence. The problem, with using a country's past record is that, in all probability, that would have been achieved with a different management team, a different set of players. Perhaps that system needs to be re-shaped."

"With the amount of groups there are going to be, it would definitely be an advantage to be a seed. If not, you could end up with Brazil or Germany. But, if we did end up in with the Dutch, the Germans or whoever, let's face it, we have had to qualify with Italy in the group and not on a neutral ground, with a home and away situation."

Fifa has given some preliminary indications that changes in the system may be made. In some ways, footballing *realpolitik* might suggest seeding England because they are sure to be one of the tournament's highest-profile teams. In others, it might be deemed prudent to make life tough for them so the potential for hooliganism can be eradicated as soon as possible.

"Nothing has been decided yet," Keith Cooper, Fifa's director of communication, said recently. "For the last couple of World Cups, the seedings were based on performance in the previous three tournaments. However, there is a school of thought which says that as we've got the Fifa ranking system, we ought to use it. They were not used for the 1994 World Cup because they were too recent to be of any real value."

Ireland might have been able to do England a favour by beating Belgium in Saturday's play-off in Brussels, but even then Hoddle's side would still be lagging behind Bulgaria and Romania under the existing system. Even if Italy had been eliminated by Russia, the latter would have been ahead of England in the seeding queue.

Hoddle will not have a chance to lobby Fifa directly about changes to the system before the seeding decision is made. That will be done at a meeting of the World Cup committee two days before the draw. Then the arguing will be over, the die cast, the tournament ready to begin.



FOOTBALL'S NEW WORLD ORDER

1. Brazil	1. Brazil
2. Spain	2. France
3. Germany	3. Italy
4. Czech Republic	4. Germany
5. Romania	5. Argentina
6. Denmark	6. Holland
7. ENGLAND	7. Spain
8. Holland	8. Belgium
9. Russia	
10. Mexico	
11. Colombia	
12. Argentina	
13. France	
14. Italy	
15. Scotland	
25. Belgium	

England, Scotland, Romania, Bulgaria, Norway, Denmark, Austria, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Tunisia, Morocco, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Colombia, Paraguay, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Mexico, United States, Jamaica, or El Salvador, Chile or Peru or Ecuador, Australia or Iran.

Japan, left, ecstatic at qualifying for the first time; Hoddle meanwhile is pondering England's seeding problem

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ENGLAND marshalled a resolute defence of the men's world team title here with a 3-0 win over Canada in the final over the weekend.

Simon Parke, the England No 1, who lost in the second round of the World Open to the British champion, Mark Cairns, easily beat the new world champion, Rodney Eyles, of Australia, in the semi-final and the most exciting newcomer to the PSA World Tour, Jonathon Power, of Canada, in the final to lead England to victory.

Eyles was grouchy, jaded and seemingly unable to adjust to the different scoring system.

Power, who earlier in the week had rather embarrassed Parke as part of Canada's qualifying win over England, suffered back spasms the night before and was still fragile when facing the mobile and shot-packed attack the 25-year-old Yorkshireman ranged against him to win 9-1, 9-0, 9-0 in just 22 minutes.

The mastery of Chris Walker, the 30-year-old London-based England captain, over Gary Waite in the following third string rubber was almost as complete. He won 9-1, 9-3, 9-4 in 35 minutes to leave 29-year-old Del Harris, of Colchester, to tidy up the second string dead rubber, just as he did in the semi-final against Australia, 9-1, 9-1, over Graham Ryding, who had beaten him nearly two weeks earlier in the World Open first round.

When England won the title for the first time in Cairo two years ago, Walker was on the bench for the final. "That has always ranked a bit," he said. "It felt much better knowing that the last ball Gary hit dispiritedly into the tin after I had run him ragged was actually giving us the title again."

This time Peter Marshall, of Nottingham, was on the bench, as he had been since managing only a rather one-paced defeat at the hands of Ryding in the qualifying match against Canada.

"Ours was a victory for strength in depth and good timing of our maximum effort for the knock-out stages," David Pearson, the England coach, said. "All three players benefited from short involvements in the World Open and a consequent strong desire to restore their reputations in the eyes of their peers from all over the world."

Wales finished twelfth, Scotland, lacking their World Open finalist, Peter Nicol, who refused to play on through the team event, finished fifteenth in an event they might even have won at full strength.

Results, page 43

Series ends with familiar tale of woe as Australia power their way to victory

Britain fall at final hurdle once more

Great Britain 20
Australia 37

By CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

NOT surprisingly, Australia never tire of the same old story in rugby league. Its well-thumbed pages ended in another predictable and sobering 2-1 series defeat for Great Britain. Amid a wretched sense of déjà vu at Elland Road yesterday, the home side lost a deciding match here for the third time in seven years.

After the recovery to level the series at Old Trafford last week, the mistakes that haunted Britain in the first match at Wembley returned with a vengeance. Everything that could go wrong for Britain did go wrong, starting with the try that they conceded after 45 seconds. That drained any confidence they might have had and six further tries by Australia stemmed from the comedy of errors.

No matter how hard they tried to ignore the weight of history, it pressed down relentlessly on the home side. In a seemingly endless pursuit, Britain appear condemned to second place. It has become a biennial ritual, since the last triumph in 1970, that Britain lose the Ashes — usually with a degree of credit — and are left to ponder the lessons — the main one being that, as long as rugby league inspires year-round enthusiasm in small pockets of the country, Britain might never have sufficient numbers to tackle Australia as equals.

Like a boxer rendered senseless by the first punch, Britain were left staggering from the opening try by Ken Nagas. Paul Acheson's name was still being read out over the public address system when he was caught unawares by Daley's chip over the Britain defence. Nagas took full advantage of a friendly bounce and exposed the full back's glaring lack of pace to score a try that set the tone for the rest of the match.

A series brought to life by Britain's gutsy win the previous week was suddenly undermined.



Daley, the Australia captain, joins in the celebrations after another try in his side's victory over Great Britain yesterday

Australia never needed to touch the heights of which they are capable, as Britain's nervy defence committed blunder after blunder.

Although Britain outscored Australia after the break, a twelfth successive series victory had already been secured. All the bad memories of the world club championship were revived by the defensive ineptitude displayed in the first half. If the hapless Acheson had not been helped off with a groin

injury, he would surely have been replaced, but not before he surrendered possession as he careered out of defence and presented Daley with a gift try.

This was a poor-packed performance by Australia. There was no repeat of the frills attempted with our success at Old Trafford for they did not dare suffer the ignominy of becoming the first touring side since 1959 to return from Britain defeated. With Daley operating like

a puppet master, Smith superb at loose forward and Tallis demonic in his tackling, Britain were hammered into early submission.

Andy Farrell's performance was a grave disappointment by his standards. The Britain captain's nerves showed as much as the rest of his team-mates. There was no tactical kicking to speak of and, whereas the home performance needed to be several notches above the one at Old Trafford, it fell

woefully below par, as Australia raced to a 25-2 lead by half-time.

Wendel Sailor's muscular running and ruthless opportunism brought him two tries in eight minutes. From a scrum after an attempted interception by McDermott, Lockyer cleverly drew Sailor on his inside and Sculthorpe had the hopeless task of trying to stop him. The next try followed a hospital pass-by Farrell to Morley, who Lockyer swooped on from 70

Tracing root cause of inferiority complex

Rob Hughes admires the versatility and maturity that yielded another series victory for Australia against Great Britain

Throughout the anthems and for some time into the decisive final match of the international series at Elland Road, a lone white balloon hovered in the breeze just above the centre circle. It was, by a distance, the longest anything in Great Britain's colours remained buoyant yesterday afternoon.

For it took just 43 seconds for the breath to be knocked out of the belief that Britain could beat Australia at rugby league on home ground in a series for the first time since 1959. In those devastating seconds, Paul Acheson, guaranteed for his debut at full back at Old Trafford eight days earlier, felt the noose around his neck as his error, his palpable inability to tackle Ken Nagas, allowed the Canberra Raiders in for the first try.

Since this was to be a monumental British effort, one of the national team putting back reason to believe, to hope, to rebuild buoyancy in the northern rugby game, why blame a young sportsman in isolation?

Rugby league is a cruel and sometimes crude game. It is raw in its passion and power, and quite taken in seeking a villain of the piece. And yet, in the 28 minutes that Acheson was to last, before being helped off with a groin injury, he typified the stumbling ineptitude, born no doubt of a fear of failure, that gave Australia all the impetus they could desire.

Acheson, the St Helens full back, is not really a rookie; he is 24.

Consider, then, that Craig Gower, the Australian, is 19. He wears the green and gold with pride; he drank lustily from the cup in the dressing-room and, sporting a gold earring he epitomises the versatility of the Australian players, and the privilege of a background that steeps youngsters in his game. "I started playing when I was five," he said. "There are more than a

dozen clubs in my area, and some of them run five sides for the under-eights."

Perhaps that is why this Australian boy did not exhibit the nervous errors of Andy Farrell, the captain, Acheson and the rest of the Britain team. Gower, a four-year contract with Penrith on the outer suburbs of Sydney already signed, lives at home with his mother, but owns two houses near Cronulla Beach.

So, possibly, the rewards and the very roots of rugby league in the two hemispheres must be considered before Britain — in particular Northern England — can rediscover a semblance of the omnipotence of the game it exported to Australia 90 years ago.

"I'm driven on by absolute determination to beat those bloody Aussies," Maurice Lindsay, the

chief executive of the Rugby Football League, said afterwards. He had managed three Great Britain teams in losing Test series. He had hoped, like his countrymen that the heroic and surprise victory in Manchester denoted a turning of fortune.

And he probably knew better, probably envisaged before the third match began that John Lang, the former hooker now coaching the Australia side, would be saying in victory: "It's a terrific feeling, not just that we won, but that we blew them off the park. You get out and get stuck in, and it's amazing how the bounce goes your way. It's about handling under pressure at this level."

The bounce: how capriciously that first ball, booted downfield by Girdler, sat up invitingly for Nagas. He, playing only because

of injury to Brett Mullins, accepted the ball with alacrity. Still, Acheson, at 3m and more than 15 stone, should have nailed him, but missed his lunges and the Australian was in, over and out.

By half-time it was a massacre, the Australians having run in five tries, without playing scintillating rugby, and leading 25-2. They had simply capitalised on errors that came from the men in white, and the great expectations of a capacity 39,337 crowd were stunned almost to silence.

True, the defiant spirit late on did rekindle some pride, but I wonder if the large numbers of so-called British supporters who booed the Australian national anthem will now reflect that this misbehaviour does nothing but get into the soul of a truly competitive opponent, building, if it were needed, their resolve to conquer.

The emphatic pace, the power, the quickness of hand and eye of the Australians looked as if it was fashioned in a different stratosphere, nevermind hemisphere.



Marshall: made nervous errors as Great Britain captain

BASKETBALL: HOME OFFICE STILL CONSIDERING CHANGE OF EMPLOYER FOR LEWIS

American cannot join frustrated Royals

By NICHOLAS HARLING

PETTY bureaucracy at the Home Office is compounding the plight of Watford Royals at the foot of the Budweiser League. The Hertfordshire club, still without a win after their 93-76 home defeat by Crystal Palace on Saturday, have been unable to include Cleve Lewis, the 35-year-old American, in their squad even though he has been released by Worthing Bears.

Vince Macaulay-Razzaq, the

Royals' owner, said: "The Home Office have issued him with a work permit, but he still can't play until they have approved his change of employer. We'd have been better off cancelling his original work permit, sending him out of the country and re-applying for a fresh one."

Palace, one place above them, had been regarded as beatable, but Watford were doomed to their fourteenth league defeat of the season long before the end. The

Towers, while Ryan Williams scored 28 for Worthing. A league record was set at Bracknell, where four periods of overtime were required before Thames Valley Tigers beat Derby Storm 145-144 in the highest-scoring game of the season. Tony Holley's 49 points for the Tigers was also a best for the season but, as the scorer of 41 for the Storm, Ted Berry was the unluckiest loser of the weekend.

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SPEEDWAY: PETERBOROUGH PROMOTER CONCERNED BY BURGEONING GRAND PRIX

By TONY HOARE

THE proposed expansion of the world championship grand prix poses a serious threat to British speedway, according to Peter Oakes, the Peterborough Panthers promoter, who is considering dropping the Elite League club into the Premier League.

Oakes has revealed that the Panthers will be unable to run on 12 of their regular Friday race nights in 1998. Five Fridays will be lost because

two Peterborough riders, Jason Crump and Ryan Sullivan, have qualified for the grand prix, with seven others ruled out through other commitments.

Oakes said: "The grand prix will affect more and more clubs, we are just the first to be hit."

There are plans for qualifying meetings for the grand prix, which would last a week, and talk of there being more grands prix. That is bound to affect British speedway — we

will end up being without our top riders for the entire week."

The Peterborough promoter suffered financially this season when his gamble on opening a sister track at Skegness failed, and the Panthers were forced to complete their fixtures at Ryde, on the Isle of Wight. Oakes is now pinning his hopes on finding sponsorship to cover the cost of staying in the Elite League.

"The financial situation does come into it," Oakes said, "but, in 1998, if we ran Elite

League we would have a period from July 31 to September 25 with only one meeting on a Friday."

Oakes says that he will wait until British promoters stage their annual conference, in Luton, next week, before announcing his final decision on the club's future. Should the Panthers drop into the Premier League, they would make Crump, whom they signed two years ago in a British record transfer deal of £35,000, available for loan.

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FOOTBALL: IRELAND LACK QUALITIES NEEDED TO QUALIFY FOR THIRD SUCCESSIVE WORLD CUP FINALS

McCarthy fails to sustain dream

	BELGIUM	2	IRELAND	1
Oliveira (25)	Houghton (88)			
Mills (56)				

(Belgium win 3-2 on aggregate)
Brussels attendance: 35,320

Belgium 2
Ireland 1
(Belgium win 3-2 on agg)

FROM RUSSELL KEMPSON
IN BRUSSELS

JACK CHARLTON, the former Ireland manager, descended the steps from his television commentary box. He paused a moment, scratched his forehead and stared across at the Ireland players applauding their still adoring supporters. He had seen it before but wanted one last look; then he was gone. It was all over.

Ireland's attempt to make a third successive appearance at the World Cup finals had failed. The rain lashed down in the King Baudouin Stadium, *We Are The Champions* boomed out over the public address system and the champagne flowed. Yet it was Belgium, not Charlton's beloved Ireland, that had qualified to play in France next year.

In the emotion of the moment, as Mick McCarthy, Charlton's successor, led his players towards the flag-waving mass of green, white and orange, it was tempting to wax lyrical about glorious failure. Had not Ireland, overwhelming underdogs in the second leg of this play-off, performed well?

Were not Belgium hanging on desperately in the closing stages, increasingly paranoid about conceding an equaliser that would have signalled their exit on away goals? And was it not only a suspiciously crafted winner that had decided the tie?

Yes, thrice over. Yet the truth was out there, somewhere, amid the hype and hysteria. Ireland under McCarthy, however honestly he has toiled and however much precocious talent is filtering through, are not ready for the main event.



Nils, the Belgium striker, slots home the goal that ended Ireland's hopes of securing a place in the World Cup finals in France next summer

Instead, during the coming months, Ireland will become no more than a warm-up act for the finalists. Once the bitter taste has left the palate, McCarthy might privately concede that France 1998 would have been a tournament too soon for a squad still in the throes of frustrating, often painful, transition. Charlton may no longer have an influence, but his shadow lingers large. Comparisons would have been ripe next year and it is better to weep now rather than later.

Ireland had done it before in 1990, against Malta, and in 1994, against Northern Ireland — reaching the finals in their concluding qualifying matches in Valletta and Bel-

fast, too: away from the comfort of home. They had drunk in the Last Chance Saloon and enjoyed it. Expectations were similarly high on Saturday, despite the residual gloom from the 1-1 first-leg draw.

Oliveira dampened the spirits in the 25th minute, running on to a pass from Claessens. McCarthy has yet to agree to the offer of a two-year extension to his contract, but it is likely that he will sign in the next few days. "We should have it sorted out in the very near future," Pat Quinn, the Football Association of Ireland president, said.

Townsend reconsiders

ANDY TOWNSEND, the Ireland captain, is to reconsider his decision to retire from international football (Russell Kempson writes). Townsend, 34, made his announcement after the World Cup defeat in Belgium on Saturday night but Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, has asked him to think again. "I've told him

that's what I'll do," Townsend said yesterday.

McCarthy has yet to agree to the offer of a two-year extension to his contract, but it is likely that he will sign in the next few days. "We should have it sorted out in the very near future," Pat Quinn, the Football Association of Ireland president, said.

"It was clearly our throw," McCarthy said. "It was when we were in control and has cost us a place in the World Cup finals." When he watches the video evidence, when the hurt has subsided, he may reassess his verdict.

No doubt, though, about Connolly's sending off, for shoving Verheyen and then kicking him when he was down. It was Ireland's third dismissal, alongside 21 bookings, in their 12 World Cup qualifying fixtures, a discipline

ary excess that McCarthy must curb.

Belgium celebrated; Given was inconsolable. The stadium stewards gathered up the soggy tricolours and handed them back through the fencing. No dining at the top table this time.

Belgium (4-4-2): F de Waele (Spenn), Labor (6-2-3), E Delfino (FC Bruges), M Verstraete (Genk), B De Bruyne (Mouscron), sub: B Verkembe (FC Bruges), G Verheyen (FC Bruges), F van der Elst (FC Bruges), G Claessens (FC Bruges), sub: L De Bruyne (Mouscron), L Nils (PSV Eindhoven), sub: M Goossens, FC Schalke 04, sub: M Goossens, FC Schalke 04, sub: M Goossens, FC Schalke 04.

IRELAND (4-4-1-1): S Given (Norwich), sub: A McNamee (Sheffield United), K Cummins (Wimbledon), I Harte (Leeds United), S Staunton (Aston Villa), — L Cawley (County), G Kelly (Wigan), sub: A McNamee (Preston), sub: S Houghton (Reading), A Townsend (Middlesbrough), sub: D Kelly (Tottenham Hotspur), sub: M Kennedy (Liverpool), sub: D Connolly (Plymouth), — L Casiraghi (AS Nancy), sub: G Biro (Austria). Referee: G Biro (Austria).

A valiant side dies with its boots on

FROM ENDA McEVoy IN BRUSSELS

THE Ireland supporters being soaked in the uncooled part of the city end stand at the Baudouin Stadium could have few complaints about the speed.

The speed of Luc Nilis's response to Ray Houghton's equaliser was a clear indication of Belgium's ability to shift gears upwards when required. Over the course of both legs, there could be no question as to which was the better side and no argument that the right team is going to France next summer. At least, and as always, Ireland died with their boots on.

It was apt that the former Hesel stadium, now trading as the King Baudouin stadium, was the venue;

the Hesel carries a significance for Irish football, no less enduring, albeit far less gaudy, than it does for the citizens of Liverpool and Turin. For it was here, on a warm Wednesday night 11 years ago, that the Jack Charlton revolution began. Eleven years can it really be that long since 300 travelling supporters — contrast with the 9,000 of Saturday night — packed a sliver of terracing one September evening and witnessed Liam Brady slide home a last-minute penalty to give the visitors an improbable 2-2 draw against the recent World Cup semi-finalists?

The match, Charlton's first serious competitive fixture as manager, was a Euro '88 qualifier. In retrospect we ought to have known there and then that something strange was afoot. Ireland didn't get results away from home in those days. They certainly didn't get penalties. When Nick Hornby observed that disappointment was the natural lot of your common or garden football fan, it was not the Ireland supporter of pre-Big Jack era he had in mind. But it should have been.

Inexplicably, the great leap forward, by now rapidly assuming the dimensions of Billy Bunter's postal order — eternally imminent but never actually materialising — was not back for another half a decade.

Would that Mick McCarthy had the likes of Stapleton, Brady and Lawrenson in their 1980s pomp available to him. Where he was forced to rely for his battering ram in attack on Tony Casiraghi — a player who, were he a horse, would be little more than a slow gallop away from the knacker's yard — his Belgian counterpart, George Leekens, could afford the luxury of doing without Gilles De Bildts PSV Eindhoven's tormentor of Newcastle United. Unfair? Football always is, especially to small nations for whom success will invariably be cyclical.

Their day, if and when it comes, must be seized with both hands, for it doesn't come too often. Ask Northern Ireland.

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Cesare Maldini salutes the Neapolitan crowd

Casiraghi sends Italy wild in the cauldron of Naples

Italy 1	Russia 0
From BRIAN GLANVILLE IN NAPLES	

ITALY, promised Cesare Maldini, their relieved and joyful manager, will not employ a blunderbuss attack in the World Cup finals in France as they did here against Russia on Saturday evening. Gigi Casiraghi and Fabrizio Ravanelli ultimately did the trick, but as one might have expected, they duplicated rather than complemented one another.

"I had already decided on this for some time," Maldini said, savouring Italy's qualification for France next summer after their 1-0 play-off win, 2-1 on aggregate.

Overall, Italy deserved to win, grinding out the result on the heavy pitch. The curiosity of the game was the ease with which they scored their winning goal. The through pass by Demetrio Albertini was precise and decisive; better, he said, than the one with which he set up Christian Vieri's goal during the 1-1 draw in the first leg in Moscow.

Russia had defended well until then, apart from one fearful moment when only a gallant save by Ovchinnikov thwarted Ravanelli after a mistake by Onopko. For once, though, the packed Russia defence was caught square, enabling Casiraghi, recalled after recent absence, to run on and score coolly and precisely. Boris Ignatov, the Russia

"This time, the attack didn't function. Only Kolyvanov, up to a point, followed instructions. I like Casiraghi, he scored a very important goal."

Indeed he did. The only moment when Russia threatened to do the same was in the first half, when Khoklov found Yurin after a fine run down the right. But the player who did so little at Millwall and has redeemed himself since could not beat Peruzzi.

Albertini must have been deeply disappointed with an inswinging corner from the left that he only just managed to push away, and a long free kick from the right to which Ciro Ferrara got a powerful header.

Ignatov pointed out that Russia had blocked Italy on

the wings and, indeed, Paolo Maldini and Pessotto rarely threatened. Maldini said that he could not understand the criticisms made of Cesare, his father, before the match. "However, in football, it's result that matters. We have beaten Russia and now we are going to France," he said.

"The rest is gossip. This is a team that deserves respect and the managerial staff totally of value. I'll tell you something else: there is an ideal rapport between players and managers. Just look at what happens in other international teams. They quarrel from morning until night."

Well, though Albertini played, and although Di Matteo had his first-half moments, there is still no player

in the Italy midfield in the tradition of Gianluca Rivera, one who, with his flair and intuition, can really keep the team on the move. With Zola or Del Piero up front, such a deficiency might be partly overcome.

But the double centre forward plan, if it continues to involve big men, is unlikely to bear much fruit in France, where Italy can hardly take the Neapolitan crowd with them.

ITALY (1-0-2-1): A Peruzzi — A Casiraghi, F Ravanelli, G Biro, G Biro, G Biro, P Maldini, D Baggio, P Maldini — F Ravanelli (sub: A Del Piero, 77), P Casiraghi (sub: I Zampieri, 89). RUSSIA (1-0-2-1): V Ovchinnikov — V Khoklov (sub: V Onopko, 77), V Yurin (sub: V Radimov, 69), I Janovskiy (sub: I Smirnov, 60), D Moshkov, D Breschko, V Kolyvanov (sub: V Yurin, 69). Referee: S Mumenthaler (Switzerland).

Japan storm into World Cup finals

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

MASAYUKI OKANO scored a minute from the end of sudden-death extra-time to give Japan a 3-2 win over Iran yesterday, and send his team through to their first World Cup finals. The result of the Asian play-off in Malaysia consigned Iran to another play-off over two legs against Australia, the Oceania group winners, on November 22 and 29, for the last place at next year's finals in France.

Okano, who came on as a substitute, scored the golden goal in the 19th minute after the score was locked at 2-2 at full time. Japan, who are co-hosting the 2002 World Cup finals, went ahead after 39 minutes with a low drive from Massashi Nakayama. However, Iran scored two goals in 13 minutes after the break, from Khodadad Azizi and Ali Daei, before Japan equalised through Shojiro Ito in the 75th minute.

Croatia held Ukraine to a 1-1 draw on Saturday night to qualify for the finals for the first time. Ukraine, who lost 2-0 in the first leg in Zagreb, dominated proceedings but never looked likely to score the three goals that they needed. Andriy Shevchenko briefly raised the hopes of

85,000 in the Olympic Stadium with a fourth-minute goal, before the visitors levelled the score after 27 minutes, when Alen Boksic's shot took a deflection and wrong-footed Alexander Shovkovsky, the Ukraine goalkeeper.

"We have reason to be elated," Miroslav Blazevic, the Croatia coach, said after the triumph. "We fought like knights and we are on our way to where we belong: where we will prove that we are a football nation."

Yugoslavia qualified for the finals, after an absence of eight years, by beating Hungary 5-0 in their second leg play-off, giving them a 12-1 aggregate triumph. Yugoslavia reached the quarter-finals in Italy in 1990, where they lost to Argentina on penalties. They were banned from competing four years ago because of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia.

Savo Milosevic, the Aston Villa striker, scored their first goal in the seventeenth minute, paving the way for Predrag Mijatovic, of Real Madrid, who claimed a hat-trick in the first leg, to complete the rout in front of a vociferous 60,000 crowd with the next four goals.

PLAYERS whose subtle gifts can baffle opponents are most at risk of becoming a mystery to themselves. In the 1-1 draw with Rangers at Pittodrie on Saturday, Eoin Jess gave Aberdeen the lead by showing refined control and movement to open up the space for a smooth drift that dipped into the top corner of the net. That episode marked the abrupt re-emergence of a talent that has been in hiding.

Despite a smattering of goals in cup competitions, Jess had not scored in league football since hitting the winner for Coventry City against Queens Park Rangers on April 13 last year. He has gradually become known as an attacking midfield player more than a forward, but it is ludicrous that 19 months should pass without Jess finding the net to assist the Highfield Road club or Aberdeen in the gathering of points.

The consequences for an admired player have been severe. He moved to Coventry for almost £2 million in February 1996 and returned to Pittodrie for a third of that value in the summer. There are other, more personal, ways in which depreciation is registered and Jess was not included in the party of 26

players that Scotland chose for the match with France last week.

Worse still, his exclusion from the squad passed without even a tremor of dissent from the public. Jess will be 27 next month and it should peev him that the images of his precocious youth are still vivid. There have been too few subsequent achievements to block the view of the exhilarating early days of his career.

All the same, difficulties ought perhaps to have been expected in his development. He does not have attributes such as pace or strength that are always a footballer's command and Jess can only call upon other qualities, such as imagination and sleight of foot. Given Jess's age, it is too late to talk of

Jess offers reminder of the striker that time forgot

KEVIN McCARRA

Scottish commentary

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"Can I get them without a song and dance?"

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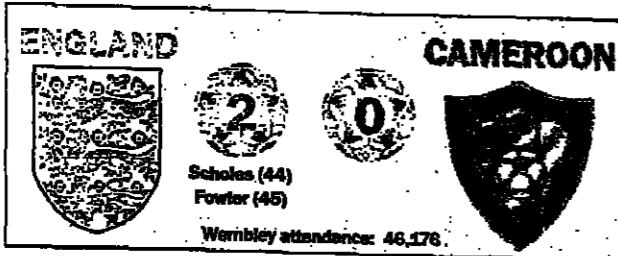
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Ferdinand's emergence prompts dilemma after England's victory over Cameroon

Hoddle contemplates sweeping changes



By OLIVER HOLT, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

IT WAS more than an hour after the end of the game when Glenn Hoddle strode into the Red Bar at Wembley and took his seat. Behind him were two televisions, each showing action from a different match. One beamed out the dying minutes of Italy's victory over Russia, the other played highlights of Burner's rather more prosaic FA Cup defeat against Watford. They formed a near backdrop to the England coach: a symbol of a man in two minds.

Much of what Hoddle had to say after England's languid but assured victory over Cameroon on Saturday was positive and decisive. He praised Paul Scholes to the skies after a performance of sustained excellence and a goal of sheer brilliance. "He can be the jewel in the crown," Hoddle said. There were words of encouragement, too, for Robbie Fowler, who responded to the suggestions that this was his last chance to prove himself worthy of being Alan Shearer's understudy by scoring with a clinical header. He, it was clear, had advanced his chances of making Hoddle's squad for the World Cup finals next summer.

But there was a cloudier side to what Hoddle had to say, too. Usually the most decisive of coaches, he admitted that he was cleanly impaled on the horns of a dilemma that goes to the very heart of England's prospects of success in France. Caution sits on one shoulder, his instincts and his footballing philosophy perched on the other.

This, moreover, is a choice that goes beyond the thorny question of which 22 he should select. It concerns the forma-

tion of the team, a radical change from the pragmatism that Hoddle has followed so far. His dilemma is whether to build his defence around a young sweeper of soaring potential, Rio Ferdinand.

Ferdinand, 19, has only just broken into the West Ham United team, but such has been the maturity of his performances that he has quickly progressed to the full England squad. On Saturday, he stepped off the bench to make his debut seven minutes before half-time, after Gareth Southgate was carried off on a stretcher with an ankle injury.

In defence, he did not put a foot wrong against a side of limited attacking ability. More significant, Ferdinand added an offensive weapon to England's armoury that has been sorely lacking. One elegant surge out of defence in the 66th minute that created a clear shooting chance for Fowler was like a revelatory flash of inspiration.

Hoddle has made no secret of the fact that he would love to play with a sweeper, but until now he has discounted it because of lack of personnel and lack of time. Now, Ferdinand has emerged and Hoddle has to decide whether to persevere with him.

"We have had a hell of a good defensive record with the clean sheets that we have got and the players we have used," Hoddle said. "It is a delicate one for me to try to sort out and get the balance right. A lot depends on who from midfield can step into defence if the sweeper presses forward. Paul Ince can do that."

"What I have got to decide is that it is really going to make



Scholes, who capped an outstanding display with a superbly-taken goal, evades Ipoua's challenge at Wembley. Photograph: Marc Aspland

us a threat to go on and win the World Cup. If that is what I really feel could be the added extra, then it would obviously be worth looking at."

"I like that system anyway.

If the player or the system is not quite ready then I would be a fool to try to force the issue. If you do not have someone to fill in, you could get caught with your pants down and concede goals."

The sweeper can be an attacking option. Ronald Koeman ... stepped in there and he could hurt you by hitting a 60-yard pass that could nullify eight or nine players. No disrespect, but I do not think Rio is going to be able to do that. Ruud Krol did that. There are only isolated players who can achieve that."

"Whether I give Rio another chance depends on all sorts of things. I am not sure whether there is enough time and whether we have got enough games. My main concern is that I do not take my eye off

the fact that we have to do well in the World Cup."

Against Cameroon, no longer the foremost power in African football even though they have qualified for France, the odds for World Cup success were promising, at least. Playing with a semi-experimental team, England always looked the more dominant, creative force. Ince was outstanding in his holding role in front of the back four and Gascoigne linked well with Scholes and McManaman in midfield. In defence, Hinchcliffe looked a useful addition to the back three and Campbell was as solid as ever.

Scholes, though, was indeed the jewel that sparked. His goal two minutes before half-time came after Gascoigne had caused panic in the Cameroon defence with a jinking run past four opponents. Pote and Kalla tackled each other trying to clear the danger and, when the ball ran on to the diminutive Manchester United midfield player, he dinked

it over Ongandzi with a stub of his right foot and it arched into the air, falling just under the crossbar.

With the half deep in injury time, Fowler ended the match as a contest. Ince played the ball out wide to Beckham and when he sent in an inviting, curling cross, Ince left it for his Liverpool team-mate, who dispatched it unerringly.

The England attack, once so problematic in its selection for France, is beginning to pick itself. Now the agonising is turning to defence.

ENGLAND (4-4-2): N. Stanhope (Leeds United); S. Parker (Nottingham Forest); G. Southgate (Aston Villa); sub: R. Ferdinand (West Ham United, 38min); T. Hinchcliffe (Everton); P. Gascoigne (Everton) sub: R. Lee (Newcastle United, 72); P. Ince (Liverpool); S. McManaman (Liverpool); P. Neville (Sheffield United); G. McManaman (Sheffield United); sub: C. Sutton (Birmingham Rovers, 79); R. Fowler (Liverpool).

CAMEROON (1-4-3-1): V. Ongandzi (Lorient); R. Sere (FC Metz); T. Mimbwe (Unattached); E. Echi (Coton Sport) — S. Milla (AS Rapide Vienne), M. Pote (FC Lorient), J. Kalla (AS Nancy), S. Ondoa (AS Nancy), P. Nama (AS Nancy), P. Nama (AS Luchon), P. Mboma (Gambie); Cester; sub: G. Nsip, Genglerberg, 78; J. Job (Olympique Lyonnais); T. Hauge (Norway).



Pair of aces: England's goalscorers against Cameroon, Fowler and Scholes, set off for the dressing-rooms

Brolin may return to England to play for Palace

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

TOMAS BROLIN could be returning to English football with Crystal Palace. Steve Coppell, the Palace manager, has invited the former Leeds United striker to a trial at Selhurst Park.

A Palace official said: "Steve Coppell has invited Brolin over for a week. He wants to see what the player's attitude is like and a permanent deal is not out of the question."

"Palace have gone to Sweden to play a friendly while there is a break in the Premiership programme this weekend, and Steve is hoping to finalise the offer of a trial while he is out there."

Brolin, who had an unhappy two-year spell at Elland Road after his £4.2-million move from Italian club Parma, is now playing for Stockholm club Hammarby, newly promoted to the Swedish first division.

Leeds saved £420,000 in wages by freeing Brolin from his contract before it expired next June. They decided to cut their losses in order to avoid a Football Association inquiry into the string of fines imposed on the former Swedish international for various misdemeanours. Brolin, 27, scored just four goals in 27 appearances for the Yorkshire club.

Peter Johnson, the Everton chairman, is reportedly prepared to sell his stake in the club for £60 million. Johnson, who bought Everton in 1994, is said to have become disillusioned with life at Goodison Park after coming under increasing pressure from supporters over his apparent unwillingness to give Howard Kendall, the manager, money to bring in new players.

The former Tranmere Rovers chairman's attempts to move the club away from Goodison Park — their home since 1892 — have also been upset a significant number of supporters.

The Football Association is expected to announce before the end of the year which company has won the contract to supply England's kit into the next century. Claims that Nike, an American company, has offered a £150 million ten-year deal have been dismissed as "premature" by an FA spokesman.

Umbro holds the contract, which runs out in June 1999, and is fighting to maintain its interest.

An FA spokesman said: "Nike and Umbro are just two of several companies who have tendered for the contract. As yet the FA have not made a decision. It could be weeks or a couple of months, but it would be expected probably around the turn of the year."

BOOKING A TICKET TO FRANCE

Glen Hoddle has six international matches in which to finalise the 22-man England squad. (Three goalkeepers and 19 outfield players) for the World Cup finals in France next summer. Oliver Holt assesses the form in the Six Nations' first match against Cameroon.

CERTAINITIES: Seaman, Ince, Gascoigne, Shearer, Sheringham, Scholes, Adams, Campbell, Beckham.

PROBABILIES: Le Saux, Martyn, Southgate, G Neville, Hinchcliffe, P Neville, Betty, Butt.

Possibles: Flowers, Waller, Watson, R Ferdinand, Pallister, Pearce, Lee, McManaman, Redknapp, Le Tissier, Ardron, Sutton, Fowler, Wright, Merson, Cole, I. Ferdinand, Collymore, Owen.

NEXT MATCH: Feb 11 v Colombia or Argentina (Wembley)

Cameroon no longer fly flag for Africa

When Cameroon ushered Salomon Olembe, 16 years and 342 days, from the bench into the match against England on Saturday, they granted him 17 minutes of spurious fame as the youngest player to take the field in a full international at Wembley. They also signalled, palpably, that Cameroon is not the nation to fulfil the prophecy of Walter Winterbottom, the first England manager, that Africa will produce a World Cup winner by the end of the millennium.

Rather, this Cameroon was displaying a search for a gimmick, something to distract the reality, that their own talent pool is nothing comparable with the 1990 team that defeated Argentina in the opening game of the World Cup in Italy, and thrilled us all to the prospect of Africa.

Be not deceived, however. There is a team of mature African players, Nigeria, that could, indeed, be a semi-finalist in France next summer.

Already the Olympic champions, a feat that required removing almost full-strength teams from Argentina and Brazil from the tournament, Nigeria's problem is organisational and political.

There are Commonwealth heads of government who wish to see Nigeria, with its exemplary talents such as Nwankwo Kanu, removed from the World Cup before a ball is kicked because of the misdemeanours of General Sani Abacha's military Government. Cameroon, meanwhile, are a country lost between looking backwards and trying to escalate time forwards.

It is not just that they lack the presence of Roger Milla, the captivating forward who so audaciously sparked that defeat of Argentina in 1990. On Saturday, they had no one remotely as powerful and as composed as Emmanuel Kunde, the defender who had thighs like Mike Tyson, no one of such lightning midfield perplexity as Louis Mafe, and no big centre forward, such as Cyrille Makanaky.

Instead, though little of body and

ROB HUGHES



At Wembley

home, unfeathered by European notions of team order. We saw it in the cheek with which Milla and others could embellish the game at the highest level. They had, then, a blue-

eyed, blond, French coach, Claude Leroy, who knew how to encourage African instinct, to implant just as much order as he felt they could embrace, to meld the two without harming the end product. Leroy is now general manager at Paris Saint-Germain and one wonders if Jean Manga Onguene, the present coach of Cameroon, should not call on his services to recreate, if possible, the blend.

Even if he were persuaded, the raw material is not apparent. This I suspect, was also foreseen. Yidnekachew Tessema, the Ethiopian who was the first president of the African Football Confederation in 1957, had warned: "African football must make its choice. Either we keep our footballers in Africa, so that we teach them to reach the highest peaks in world competitions and restore dignity to the African people, or let our best elements go, remaining the eternal suppliers to favoured countries abroad."

Little good does it seem to do the boys, their paymasters, their countries, or anyone but the merchants who coin off their fees as licensed Fifa agents. They are procurers of embryonic talent and they ruin the growth at a stroke.

England, thank goodness, has a more mature ideal. We saw it in the 66th minute on Saturday when Rio Ferdinand, schooled at West Ham United and already aware of the error of his ways when it comes to drink-driving, at least has roots that offer him the chance to grow into something quite special on our playing fields. Ferdinand, on as a substitute, elegantly patrolled Wembley with his tall and measured stride.

He did what Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, has been seeking from a defender: he came from the back, converting defence into attack simply by following his instinct, by using the vision that Franz Beckenbauer showed 25 years ago. When Ferdinand advanced three-quarters of the field, Robbie Fowler squandered the opening; but remember that 66th minute, for it points to a brighter tomorrow for England.

Africa, if Nigeria can hold together their potential and be allowed to deliver, remains, eternally, the continent of tomorrow. England, if it nurses the opening that Saturday provided for Ferdinand, can begin to aspire to reclaim its yesterdays.

Keep our opinions to yourself.



Cameroon lack players with the captivating skill of Milla, right, who inspired his country in Italia 90

It's all very well to say share and share alike, but in honesty wouldn't you prefer to enjoy at leisure your own copy of the Times Educational Supplement? The FE Focus section, in particular, really does deserve much more than a rushed flick through in the staffroom. So for opinions worth taking the time to listen to, buy your own copy, take it home and keep it to yourself.

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NOVEMBER 17 1997

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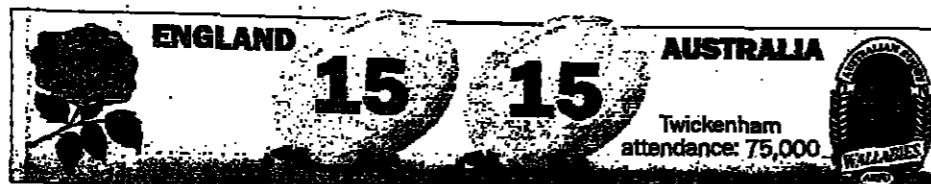
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Emergence of Perry lights up an otherwise drab and dreary display at expectant Twickenham

England's spirit of adventure fails to impress



BY DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

SPORT is a process of constant renewal, springtime in autumn, which engenders irrational outbursts of optimism. The disappointment surrounding England's draw with Australia at Twickenham on Saturday was, therefore, the more tangible so clearly was it shared by players, support staff and spectators who, at one stage, were moved to slow-handicap competitors involved in a seemingly endless sequence of errors.

Should we have looked for more? In an individual sense, yes, because these are players practising their art professionally and wet conditions have never been accepted as an excuse by the better teams. But, in the context of a young England team that had never played together before, five of whom were new to international rugby, and an Australia team whose confidence has been badly impaired, a draw was a fair result.

Considering that Australia, with nearly 300 caps compared with England's 170, carried by far the greater experience and should have benefited from work done together on tour in Argentina, England could derive satisfaction from competing so well.

"Australians will point to their team's two tries and the threat posed by Horan, Tunc and Larkham whenever they had the ball, but the fact remains that England seldom ceased searching for the attacking option and Catt's penalty count was the result."

Execution of team skills,

however, was sadly awry. If quality of performance was Clive Woodward's yardstick in this first meeting of four in quick succession against the three southern-hemisphere powers, then England have far to go; the new coach will, though, derive some satisfaction from the pervasive attitude of attack (not all of it well-judged) that is not something of which many England teams of the past have been accused.

On an individual level, he will look at Matt Perry, to a lesser extent Will Greenwood, and the returning Gareth Archer and be happy with his selection. Perry's certainty was a revelation, the possibilities endless as to what he may achieve from full back.

One cameo bore particular testimony to his high quality: his recognition that Rees, isolated and under pressure, needed help followed by his driving into the ruck like a veteran flank forward to help to save the day. Two try-saving tackles in the first half alone went with his ability to move either way, which is where the injured Tim Stimpson has specific drawbacks.

Not all of Perry's game shone like gold but, because he is a mature young man, his tackling was so secure because the tackle count of their front-line colleagues was less impressive. Nor, on either flank, were Adedayo and Rees able to judge the flight of kicks as well as they might have.

England's best period was the opening quarter, even though Catt's first penalty was their only reward. You can argue forever whether Australia might have achieved a match-winning advantage had Eales been more secure with his goal-kicking: he missed two penalties and a conversion in the first half and a third penalty later.

His failure led to the decision to kick for touch rather than at goal before Roff stepped in to the breach. Catt, it should be remembered, lost his accuracy in the second half and four penalty chances went begging.

His first three successes gave England their 9-5 interval lead, Australia's try the result of a good counter when Perry's kick went into midfield

and delightful work between Horan and Gresgan. If Australia were to take the match, it should have been midway through the second half, when Tunc took Horan's slipped reverse pass close to a ruck and ran through to the line.

That was a critical moment for England and they responded with their best period of sustained play, Bracken working the blind side and Adedayo smashing off his wing to within two metres of the line before Larkham brought him down.

But that was a rare glint of what might have been. So frequently was the ball turned over by players who have yet to learn that patience is a virtue that neither side could achieve the continuity that they so desperately needed.

Catt at least retained his composure. Two minutes into injury time and with England trailing 15-12, he opened up the midfield, chipped Larkham and was body-checked by the Australia full back, who

received a yellow card. Catt picked himself up and kicked the 36-metre penalty goal that levelled the match; that he failed to win it from 54 metres even deeper into injury time was no surprise, while Australia's 60-metre breakout, which gave Roff a penalty chance from 48 metres, was a poignant reminder of better days.

SCORERS: England: Penalty goals: Catt 5 (min. 32, 40, 65, 82) Australia: Try: Gresgan (27), Tunc (61). Conversion: Roff (27). Penalties: Catt (2), Roff (2).

SCORER'S SEQUENCE: (England first): 3-0, 3-5, 6-5, 9-5 (half-time), 9-12, 12-12, 12-15, 15-15.

ENGLAND: M B Perry (Bath); D L Rees (Wales); W J H Greenwood (Leicester); P R de Glanville (Bath); rep. P J Grayson, Northampton; A A Adedayo (Bath); G R Catt (Bath); K P P Bracken (Scarborough); J Leonard (Harlequins); A E Long (Bath); rep. R Cooderill, London; rep. J Roff (Leeds); W R Roff (Worcester); M O Tunc (Leeds); rep. G S Archer (Newcastle); L B N Adedayo (Wasps, captain); R A Hill (Scarborough); A J Diprose (Scarborough).

AUSTRALIA: T J Horan (Queensland); P W Howard (ACT); B N Tunc (Queensland); E Fladiey (Queensland); G M Gresgan (ACT); R L Gough (Queensland); rep. J Roff (Leeds); rep. J T Blundell (NSW); rep. A Heath, NSW; 59mm; J Langford (NSW); J A Eales (Queensland, captain); rep. D J Wilson (Queensland, 69); V Oshengase (NSW).

Referee: A Watson (South Africa)

Perry shows the determination that made the full back stand out in an otherwise lacklustre England performance. Photograph: Marc Aspland

New boys face ultimate test

BY DAVID HANDS

ever, that conservative thinking will play no part in his approach.

There is little prospect of Alex King reclaiming the place at fly half from which he was forced to withdraw last week. Woodward wants him to play a match before being exposed to an international, and tomorrow may be too early. Adedayo Adedayo is expected to recover by Saturday from a scratchy eyeball, but England need huge improvement in the set pieces to have any prospect against the best team in the world.

"We have to improve out of sight, just to compete," John Mitchell, the assistant coach, said. "We have to learn to attack, we have to react quicker, be more urgent on the ball. We are going to experience very tight defences, so we

have to make progress through the hard yards."

England's eight five could not impose itself on an Australian pack fresh from the demands made on them by Argentina, whose scrummage power is legendary. "We have to change the mind-set at scrums, but it's not going to happen overnight," Mitchell said, acknowledging the use of the scrum as an attacking weapon. "The easy solution is to play more experienced players, but if we are to progress, we must have increased depth and the players on Saturday will have learnt a lot."

Australia face Scotland on Saturday, hoping that Joe Roff can extend his future as a goalkicker. "I would be very pleased to hand the kicking on, as soon as someone wants to do it," John Eales, their personable captain, said.



Dallaglio seeks perfect balance

Michael Calvin reports on how the new England captain prepared his fledgeling side

The England dressing-room was consumed by the conflicting forces of strident self-belief and suppressed self-doubt. Some players felt the need to doubt; others silently scanned the walls with nervous, darting eyes. It was time for Lawrence Dallaglio to think on his feet.

He had no pre-planned speech for the callow team clustered around him: no theatrical call to arms to recruit for the occasion. His priority, in the final seconds before the referee's knock on the door on Saturday, was to maintain the eternal balance between emotion and logic, aggression and reason.

"Remember the top four inches," he said, tapping his head and referring to the intelligence required to play international rugby. Discipline is essential; commitment is absolute, responsibility is collective. "You deserve to be here," he said, countering the inevitable insecurities of five new caps. "Look each other in the eye. You know you are with the best guys you could be."

All too soon they were gone, sprinting out of the tunnel towards the light and sound of Twickenham. Most instinctively, looked up to the West Stand in an attempt to recognise their relatives. Dallaglio thought, for an acutely personal instant, of his parents, Vincenzo and Eileen, and of how far they had travelled together.

They introduced him to mini-rugby at Staines, braved the muddy, wind-whipped touchlines of Ampleforth College and eased him through the initiation rituals of second XV rugby at Wasps. Now they looked down from the concrete shrine to professionalism on a son who was captaining his country for the first time.

"I'm not the sort to wallow in it all, to tell myself how well I've done but, when you run out there, every time, it feels like the first time," Dallaglio reflected. He felt a fleeting surge of pride but, deep down, held himself back because of the hidden limitations of the job.

As a powerful yet philosophical man, who possesses a quiet dignity, he finds himself cast as a role model for a new generation. For the foreseeable future, his every utterance, each instinct and action, will be scrutinised. Importan-

cy, he understands that a captain cannot operate in isolation, however hard his media profile.

Dallaglio is the antithesis of Will Carling, whose captaincy of England illustrated the power of the cult of personality. They both began against Australia — Carling with a 28-19 victory nine years earlier — and both represented revolution, rather than evolution. But there are similarities. Power is devolved in the new England. Dallaglio does not dominate, nor does he spout the psychobabble of the man-management industry.

"Everyone has the right to say what they feel because, out there on the pitch, there are no hiding places," he said. "The best players find the right equilibrium. They balance that physical edge with mental discipline. It's my

job to create an atmosphere that people can feed off."

Martin Johnson, the British Isles captain, is encouraged to mirror Dallaglio's raw passion in the privacy of the dressing-room. Jason Leonard's understated authority naturally drew Andy Long and Will Green, newcomers in the front row, towards him. Phil de Glanville and Mike Catt played a similar shepherd's role with Will Greenwood, David Rees and Matt Perry, the new backs.

MARC ASPLAND

"The new guys have learnt that international rugby is a totally different experience," Dallaglio said yesterday, after distilling the flaws of a typically anticlimactic draw against Australia. "It is not just an 80-minute exercise — it spans the whole week, from Monday night until Sunday

morning. The atmosphere is unique and the distractions are very different. The most important lesson, in playing terms, is that the international game is faster, harder than anything you have previously experienced. The hits carry more force. There is less time on the ball. You need the patience to wait for the right opportunity and the ability to make the most of it when it comes."

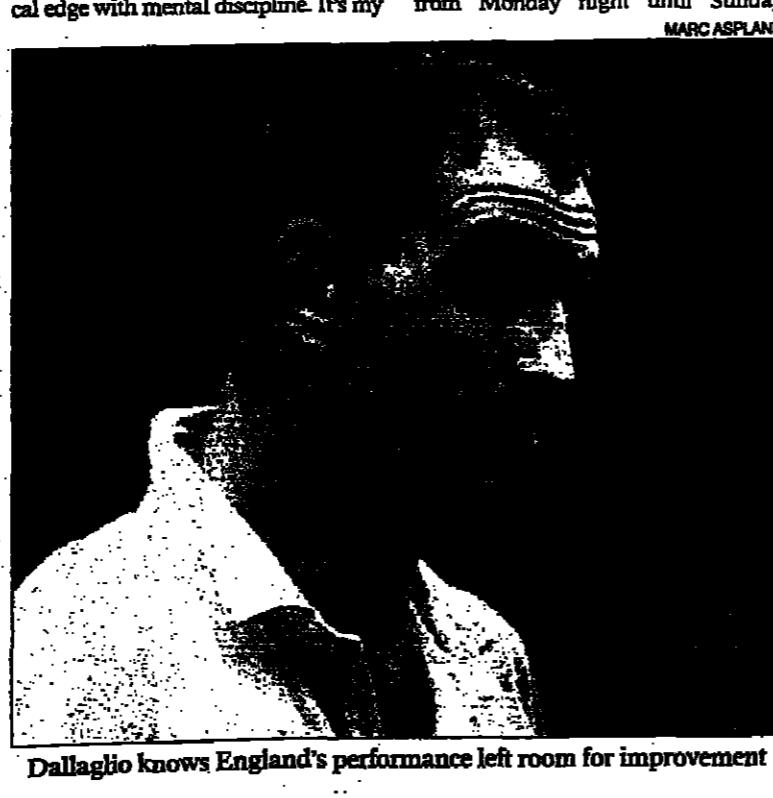
"As a newcomer, you have to listen to all those around you, take on board what they say and then make your own decisions. It is up to you to digest what you feel is important, and discard what you feel you can do without. The challenge is to sustain the quality of your performance."

It takes up to 72 hours for the body to absorb the punishment of an international. A vivid red weal, some four inches long, beside Dallaglio's right eye is his souvenir of his introduction to the England captaincy. Though the inquest will not begin until later this week, his thoughts are beginning to crystallise.

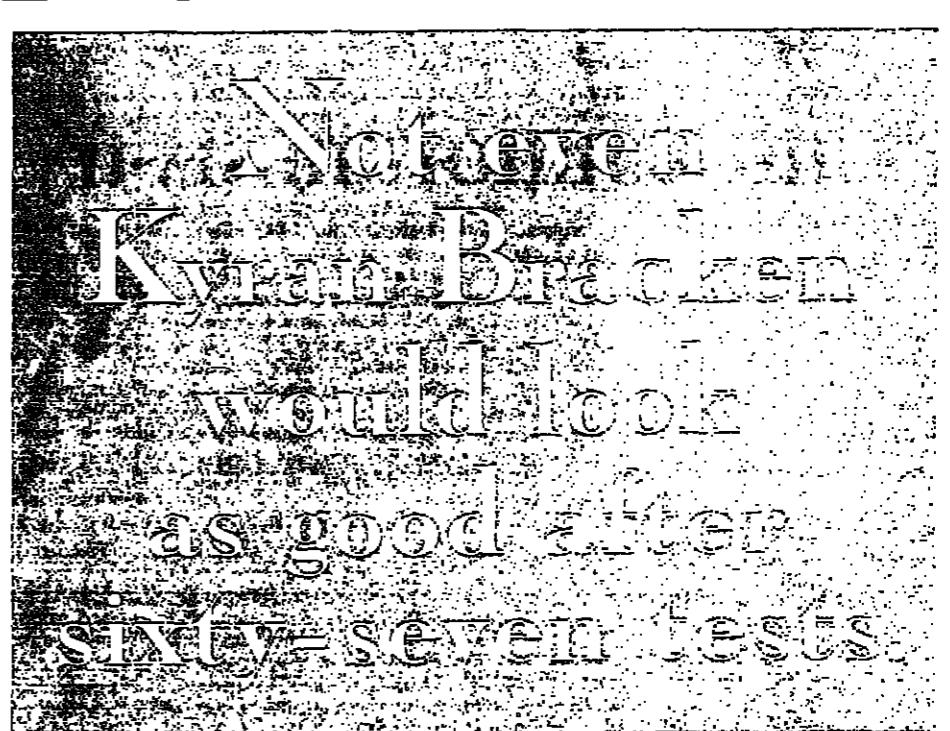
"We're obviously aware of the things we need to improve," he said. "This is not a one-game thing. It is going to evolve and there is a lot more to come from this group. We stood off Australia a bit, paid them a bit of respect, but the self-belief is there because we didn't buckle. It is a question of allying desire and attitude, of maximising the potential of individuals."

"If we want to learn what a good team is, we have only to look at a Formula One pitstop. Everyone has a specific role to play, whether they are wiping the driver's visor or changing one of the wheels. Each person is working under intense pressure, but with such efficiency that, as a unit, they become an absolute machine."

"All the best teams are like that. In motor racing, you'd think of Williams. In football, you'd think of Liverpool in the Eighties. In rugby union, you'd probably think of the All Blacks. Since they were beaten in the 1995 World Cup final, they've taken their game to another level." A level, of course, that England must match at Old Trafford on Saturday. Stirring words, rather than soothing words, will be required.



Dallaglio knows England's performance left room for improvement



Watches of Switzerland

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GOLF

Men talk their way to victory

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT
IN PRAIA D'EL REY, PORTUGAL

THE Battle of the Sexes turned out to be less a contest more in a war of words. The Seniors, captained by Tommy Horton, ran away with it over this outstanding new links course, winning the third day's singles against the women professionals of Europe by 5½-4½ and thus the inaugural European Cup 13-7.

When men play golf against women, the key question is how much of an advantage from the tees the men should concede to make it a test of skill and not strength. Determining this is every bit as difficult coming up with a satisfactory solution to some centuries-old religious dispute.

But in the five fourballs, on Saturday, the men's officials were at fault. The women needed more of an advantage at this form of golf, particularly on a windy day. The women were well-beaten and to all intents and purposes the competition ended there and then.

At times the event resembled a nursery game. He who squealed loudest and longest won the day. It was the men after foursomes on Friday, the women after the fourballs on Saturday and there was kind of an eerie silence after the singles.

"Our tees are too far back," the men said on Friday evening, when the first day's five foursomes had ended level, 2½-2½. When the tees were adjusted for the second day's play, it was the women's turn to howl. "Our tees were not far enough forward," the women said after they had been whitewashed in the fourballs and the score had moved to 7½-2½.

"It is totally unfair," Marie Laure de Lorenzi, the women's captain, said, ignoring the fact that the men had actually played very well (they were 34 under par for the 67 holes they played) and emphasising, instead, how difficult the women found playing that course in a firm wind.

"The men had whinged after the foursomes and got what they wanted. We played well today but it was totally demoralising."

The tees were adjusted for the third day's singles to give the women a further advantage, 330 yards on the front

Scores, page 43



Westwood keeps his eyes on the prize during his successful bid to retain the Sumitomo Visa Taiheiyo Masters title

Japan hails Europe's rising son

FROM PATRICIA DAVIES
IN GOTOEMBA, JAPAN

THE Japanese are calling Lee Westwood Europe's Tiger Woods, and the 24-year-old from Worksop, who covets the world No 1 spot himself, did nothing to disabuse his hosts of that notion when he won one of their biggest tournaments, the Sumitomo Visa Taiheiyo Masters, for the second successive year at Gotemba, near Tokyo, yesterday.

"Any competitor does not want to lose," she said, "and this female-male thing makes it much more pleasurable to win. There was a wee bit of niggle but I suppose we'll all go out together tonight, have a few drinks and have a good time."

In victory, Horton presented the image of a relieved man. So, more than likely, would men the world over. One of his team had spoken to him about the unspeakable — losing to women. "You're playing with my pension," he had said to his captain. Horton concluded: "We were all very apprehensive."

Scores, page 43

The Englishman's final round of 71 gave him a total of 272, 16 under par and earned him 27 million yen, and it is — if it translates into something like £130,000 — and Westwood's earnings in the past three weeks are in the region of £440,000, taking his prize-money for the season to more than a £1 million so far. (He made a little dent in the total by buying his father, John, a Land Rover for his fiftieth birthday today.)

This week he is competing in the Dunlop Phoenix, Japan's richest tournament. Next week his world tour — he played in Spain, where he won the Volvo Masters, and in the US, where he was second in the Subaru Sarazen World Open, in the weeks preceding the Japan jaunt — takes him to Melbourne for the Holden Australian Open.

"If I win the next two tournaments, I might buy an aeroplane," Westwood, al-

ready a seasoned globetrotter, said.

It was far from a wistful thought, for he is a confident young man with a placid nature and takes everything as it comes. "You've got to take your chances when you're playing well and when you get on a roll, you can see yourself winning every week."

Yesterday, on another bleak day (the course is ruined for its views of Mount Fuji, but the landmark was shrouded in cloud all week) Westwood's serene temperament survived a severe test. He three-putted twice in the first five holes — at the 1st and the 5th — but reached the turn in level par, thanks to birdies at the par fives, the 3rd and 6th.

O'Meara, meanwhile, had gone out in 33 and drew level, on 15 under par, with a birdie three at the 10th. The American lost his edge when he missed a two-foot birdie putt at the long 11th — where Westwood secured his four

to regain the lead — and he fell back completely with bogeys at the 15th and 16th to leave the chase to the Ozaki boys.

Joe, a regular on the US Tour, had three successive birdie threes from the 14th to cut the lead to one, but dropped a shot at the short 17th and had to hole a 15-footer at the task for a birdie four to tie with Jumbo, Japan's No 1 and the world No 5, on 273, 15 under.

The last putt was only two feet but Westwood had missed one of the same length at the 14th, and that was on his mind. It was not lost on anyone else, either, for television re-ran the miss as the Englishman was surveying his putt on the 18th. But there was to be no reprise — and no reprise for the Ozakis.

CRICKET: PAKISTAN'S EMERGING TALENTS MAKE THEM SLIGHT FAVOURITES TO BEAT WEST INDIES

Wasim's return should tilt Test balance

FROM MICHAEL HENDERSON
IN PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

TWO teams with a sense of mission begin the Test match that starts today in this frontier city close to the Khyber Pass. Pakistan have just been beaten at home by South Africa; West Indies want to amend the widely held view that the modern game is passing them by. Failure for either could have significant consequences.

Having inspected a dry, cracked pitch that is expected to offer turn rather than later, both sides will give Test debuts to slow bowlers. West Indies will rely on Rawl Lewis, a 23-year-old leg spinner from the Windward Islands, to support the familiar pace team of Walsh, Ambrose and Bishop. Pakistan have promoted a local off spinner, Arshad Khan, who plays ahead of Saqlain Mushtaq in the first game of a three-match series.

Wasim Akram, restored to the captaincy now that his injured shoulder has healed, explained that Saqlain, who played for Surrey in the county championship in the summer, had mislaid his best form against South Africa. Arshad, at 26 a veteran by Pakistan standards, partners Mushtaq Ahmed in an attack that is also without Waqar Younis.

Shahid Naez is preferred to Waqar, whose absence is accounted for by the

long-standing foot injury that has clipped two yards off his fastest pace and by the flatness of the pitch. Hamza Rashid, the team manager, thought it best to conserve the bowler's fitness for the subsequent Tests in Rawalpindi and Karachi, where he hoped the pitches would be livelier.

Pakistan have never been short of talented young players but, at the moment, they appear to have an embarrassment of riches. In order to accommodate Aamir Sohail, who moves up to his customary opener's position, they have left out Ali Naqvi, who, three Tests ago, made a century on his debut. Nor is there room for Hasan Raza, the wonder boy, last year, or Shahid Afridi, who has blotted his copybook by going off to play in Bangladesh without the board's consent.

It is never easy to gauge the mood of the Pakistan team. To infer too much from the recent defeat against South Africa and their indifferent form in the one-day competition that followed would be erroneous. They remain a side choc-full of brilliant players and, now that Wasim is back to apply a steady hand on the tiller, they must be favoured to beat West Indies.

This is a busy winter of international cricket for Pakistan, who play fewer Test matches than the other established nations. In the new year they go



Wasim: restored to captaincy

to South Africa for three more Tests and, if Wasim is not to be a victim of pass-the-parcel, the game by which this country tends to appoint its captains, his men really need to win this series.

There is a smell of decay about their opponents. Clive Lloyd, the team manager, is entitled to point out that they have lost only one series away from the Caribbean in the past 17

years, but this side has been in decline for at least three years, sustained in that time by the astonishing tenacity of Walsh and Ambrose and the sporadic brilliance of Lara.

It is asking a lot of young Lewis to pitch him in for a debut in conditions that are as foreign to these players as they could possibly be. When they ruled the roost with their divisions of fast bowlers, West Indies abandoned the art of spin bowling as a means of winning matches. Now they are struggling to find fast bowlers of the necessary quality.

Walsh, 35, and Ambrose, a year junior, are approaching the end of their distinguished Test careers. They have taken 645 wickets between them and have hardly missed a match in the course of their labours. Bishop, deprived by injury of the chance to become truly great, has also turned 30. Before long, it seems, Rose and Dillon may be leading the attack. It does not sound a frightening prospect.

Campbell and Stuart Williams retain their places at the top of the order, despite a claim by the uncapped Philo Wallace, who made a career-best 142 against an Invitation XI in Rawalpindi last week. There is an English presence in Peshawar. David Shepherd is standing as the neutral umpire and Raman Subba Row is the match referee.

JOHN HIGGINS today requires the strongest fightback of his short but highly successful professional career in order to prevent the most surprising result of the Nineles at the Liverpool Victoria United Kingdom championship in Preston.

After a session he would prefer to forget, Higgins, edged out 10-9 by Stephen Hendry in the final last year, is trailing Gary Pilling, of Bristol, 7-1 and is within two frames of elimination.

Runner-up in the Grand Prix last month and for some time Hendry's closest pursuer in the world rankings, Higgins has rarely performed less effectively. Pilling, the world No 84, did nothing particularly special, but pulled away steadily.

A clearance of 42 enabled Higgins to steal the sixth frame on the pink, but he could not generate any momentum. Already frustrated by his form, the Scot had no luck in the closing frame of the

HOCKEY

Southgate put end to reign of cup-holders

BY SYDNEY FRISKE

SOUTHGATE moved into the fifth round of the English Hockey Association Cup yesterday with a comfortable 4-1 home win against Teddington, the holders. Reading, the runners-up last year, had better luck with a 4-2 victory at East Grinstead.

Duncan Woods converted two short corners for Southgate, whose sharper reactions inside the circle paid dividends. Teddington made little headway against the home side's sound defence and found their rhythm only in the last ten minutes. Further goals by Shaw and Carolan pushed Southgate into a 4-0 lead before Wallis scored from a short corner in the 66th minute for Teddington.

Reading took control of their match against East Grinstead in the second half after an interval score of 1-1. Ashdown scored two goals for Reading, one from a short corner, with Pearn and Wyatt from a short corner, chipping in. Welsh, from a short corner, and Laird replied.

Canterbury recorded the day's highest score with a 10-5 victory at home against Guildford. Danny Laslett hit the target four times for

Canterbury from open play. Other premier division clubs to survive were Cannock, Beeston, Doncaster, Hounslow, Old Loughtonians and Barford Tigers.

Hounslow were taken to extra time by Surbiton with the score at 2-2. Gillison scoring for Hounslow in the 81st minute from a short corner for a 3-2 victory.

The only non-league clubs left in the competition are Chichester, Ipswich, Spalding and Old Cranleighians. Sheffield went down 4-3 to Chichester after Chichester had led 3-2 by half-time. The scorers for Chichester were Savory (two) and Lock, who converted two short corners. The goals for Sheffield were obtained by Cordon, Bradshaw from a short corner and McAuliffe.

Canterbury's 3-3 draw against East Grinstead in the national league on Saturday kept them on top of the premier division, a point ahead of Southgate, who defeated Guildford 4-0. Simons scored twice for Southgate, with Attala and Shaw adding to the score. Bhatti saved East Grinstead from defeat at home with an equalising goal two minutes before the end.

Ipswich bow out

SUTTON COLDFIELD

blundered three times in a five-minute spell after the break, against Ipswich. Jane Sixsmith levelled after Tracy Fry opened the scoring from a 24th-minute penalty corner, before Sarah Bamfield finished in style.

The league result keeps Ipswich in second place in the table behind the unbeaten champions and title favourites, Slough, who swept to a 6-3 victory against Trojans.

"Our season is effectively over because we have very little realistic chance of defeating Slough," Donna Mills, the Ipswich manager, said. "We have a growing list of injuries and are just hoping to have 11 fit players for Saturday's game against the wall."

Determined to improve their lowly league position, Sutton paid a heavy price after Charlotte Merrett missed two first-half opportunities, and Louise Turney

Results, page 43

SNOOKER

Headache for Higgins as Ponting threatens upset

BY PHIL YATES

JOHN HIGGINS today requires the strongest fightback of his short but highly successful professional career in order to prevent the most surprising result of the Nineles at the Liverpool Victoria United Kingdom championship in Preston.

After a session he would prefer to forget, Higgins, edged out 10-9 by Stephen Hendry in the final last year, is trailing Gary Pilling, of Bristol, 7-1 and is within two frames of elimination.

Runner-up in the Grand Prix last month and for some time Hendry's closest pursuer in the world rankings, Higgins has rarely performed less effectively. Pilling, the world No 84, did nothing particularly special, but pulled away steadily.

A clearance of 42 enabled Higgins to steal the sixth frame on the pink, but he could not generate any momentum. Already frustrated by his form, the Scot had no luck in the closing frame of the

as "unprofessional". It was the motivation prod the Irishman required and he went on to capture the title.

Fast forward six months and again Doherty has discovered a timely source of inspiration as he attempts to join Steve Davis, John Parrott and Hendry as the only player to complete the World and UK Championship double in the same year.

Hendry's 5-2 defeat by Tai Pichit, an amateur wild-card entry, in the first round of the 1994 Thailand Open, is generally regarded as the biggest upset of the decade, but unless Higgins can win eight of the remaining nine frames, that will be overtaken.

Higgins rallied from a 6-1 deficit to beat Tony Drago 9-8 12 months ago, but an immediate improvement will be needed to block Ponting's path into the last 32.

"To make me 20-1 is an absolute joke," Doherty, who reached the third round on Saturday with a 9-3 victory over Karl Broughton, said. "I'm not a gambler myself, but I know good value when I see it and I'm sure a few folks back home will take advantage".

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JAMAICA

Broadcasters strive to get on rugby wavelength

According to Mark Durden-Smith, this was phase one of Mission Southern Hemisphere. For Clive Woodward, it was phase one of Mission Rebuild. And, for BSkyB, it was phase one of let's-make-this-as-much-like-Grandstand-as-possibly-can.

It was an uncharacteristically unadventurous approach by the satellite broadcaster, but then rugby has always been a conservative game. Investing in a satellite dish was considered enough of a shock to be going on with.

The plan now is to make England rugby fans feel at home as quickly as possible. Familiarity came in the form of Nick Farr-Jones, the former Australia captain, whose tech-

nical analysis has been one of the cornerstones of the BBC's five nations' coverage in the past few seasons, and Bill Beaumont, whose broadcasting career looked to have come to an end last season along with the BBC's contract.

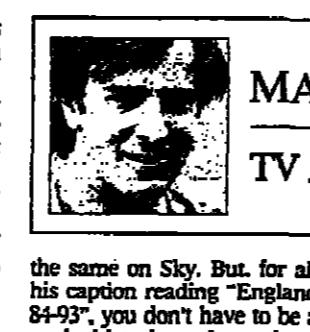
As for gently reminding people that England's home internationals are now on satellite, I can't think of a better way than with four games against the three best sides in the world over successive weekends.

Sky's studio foursome was completed by some home-grown talent. Durden-Smith, who with half a season presenting club rugby behind him is already a competent anchor man, and Stuart Barnes, its fast-talking expert

summariser. The effect was good, but it could have been better.

What it lacked was a representative from the Will Carling glory years, years that changed the public perception of English rugby forever by making it both glamorous and fashionable. Carling himself was the obvious choice, so obvious that ITV had snapped him up to front their recorded coverage, which, thanks to the delayed kick-off at Twickenham, got underway barely 15 minutes after the final whistle had blown.

On the BBC, it was a position that the articulate Rob Andrew made his own, so there was a certain justice in watching Barnes, his perennial understudy, seeking to do



MATTHEW BOND
TV ACTION REPLAY

the same on Sky. But, for all his caption reading "England 84-93", you don't have to be a rugby historian to know that's not quite the whole story.

If suggesting Barnes make way again sounds harsh, it is, for two reasons. First, Barnes's successful media career is founded on his maverick reputation, the angry outsider — that's why Sky chose him in the first place for their club coverage. Only for

internationals does he need to make way for somebody who was an automatic first choice — an Andrew, an Underwood, a Moore.

The second reason why Barnes could painlessly vacate a studio chair is that he wouldn't have to move very far. His double-handed commentary with the enjoyably reliable Miles Harrison may lack the poetry of Bill McLaren but, in terms of

accuracy and instant analysis, it's top notch. Barnes is also the natural first choice for perhaps the main thing lacking from Saturday's build-up, a recorded, set-piece interview with Clive Woodward, the new England coach. Graham Simmons, Sky's roving reporter, did well with a couple of hastily grabbed minutes, but England's first game under its new coach needed something more formal to set the scene.

But, if Sky's studio panel needs a bit of gentle tuning, then ITV's needed a serious rethink. Having spent all its money on Carling, his studio guests were Bob Dwyer and Damian Hooley. These are guests for rugby's cognoscenti, not for mass-market terrestrial television. Ironically, the

obvious house-wife's choice candidate appeared the other side of the early evening news when Jeremy Guscott presented *Gladiators*.

Carling himself was fine — indeed, the biggest challenge he seemed to face was squeezing those famously arrogant features into something resembling a welcoming smile. Bit more practice and he might actually manage it.

For the match itself, ITV fielded probably the strongest of its commentary teams from the last World Cup, John Taylor and Steve Smith. The pictures were exactly the same as Sky's, except for the fact that its replays didn't make that maddening "whoosh" noise.

More than once, Sky had

reason to regret its passion for replays. In the first half, a quickly-taken penalty was dangerously missed, while, in the second, the director seemed to be under the illusion that the ball was immediately "dead" after a missed penalty kick.

But, all in all, it was a good weekend for rugby on television. Sky got its feet under the table at Twickenham, ITV ensured that the next World Cup won't come as quite the culture shock the last did and the BBC showed, if not entirely convincingly with live coverage of the one-sided encounters between Ireland and the All Blacks and Wales versus Tonga, that there is life after England. It, too, has better weekends to come.

Streets of Dublin paved with qualified optimism and peculiar logic on day of international setbacks

Irish take defeats in their stride

LYNNE TRUSS

A fine, cautious distinction was current everywhere in Dublin on Saturday. "More hopeful than optimistic" was how it went. Very Irish, you might think, but in the circumstances it made good sense. Ireland were playing the All Blacks in the afternoon at Lansdowne Road (chance of winning: nil), with a last-ditch football World Cup qualifier against Belgium in Brussels in the evening.

"Judgment Day", the newspapers rather recklessly called it. But that only a fool would pin too much on the outcome of a day so obviously loaded against the green-shirted from the start. "Give 'em lacking," exhorted one paper midweek. But, to reflect the real mood, it might have added, in smaller letters, "Or give it a try, anyway."

I was optimistic myself. But that was before I started to read about the Ireland team, and was obliged to fall in with the thumbs-down realists. Because, it turns out, whereas a few years ago Jack Charlton led a stout-hearted team to undreamt-of international honours, things have changed recently, and nobody mentions Macedonia around here unless they're ordering a fruit salad.

The trouble is linked to demography. By some accident of births, deaths and retirements, Mick McCarthy's side is a spatchcock of retirement-ready, battle-scarred gaffers and demoralised babies-in-arms, with scarcely an able-bodied, first-team footballer.

Moreover, two weeks previously, in the home leg against Belgium, the boys in green had performed so badly that they had been lucky to escape with 1-1 draw. Luc Nilis wrought havoc, and McCarthy's future as manager was called into question.

"Bring back Jack," a woman at the bus stop said on Friday. "Joe Kinnear's your man," a bloke in O'Neill's, a Dublin pub, said

before the match on Saturday. Although the bloke was so drunk he couldn't work out how to dismount a bar stool, that sounded rather astute.

Nevertheless, come on, you boys in green. Forget the rugby result. Forget this Nils chap. This isn't a funeral. Ask yourself, are you really scared of Belgium? Personally, I didn't really understand why Belgium would be such a terrifying opponent, in any case. People don't generally quake at the name. True, Jean-Claude van Damme is a Belgian, but then so was that gentle fellow, René Magritte. Just imagine the Belgians all playing with tubas on their heads. That ought to help, surely.

Going out on the Guinness in Dublin after a rugby international, when 49,000 disgruntled people might have the same idea, would be against my natural instinct ordinarily, so I'm ashamed to say I made Simon Barnes, my colleague at *The Times*, come with me to watch the footie on television in

Belgium's first goal (too painful),



Enthusiastic supporters in Dublin are still able to raise a glass and a smile, despite witnessing defeats for the Ireland rugby union and football teams

O'Neill's. This was rather useful as he can quote James Joyce in big chunks.

Our position under a staircase started out as a fine observational place, but became more problematical as the evening progressed, and the hundreds drinking Guinness and shouting at the tops of their voices in this heaving, hot pub turned to thousands. We could always see the screen, but the trouble is that, the more you retreat under a staircase, the more you constrict your neck and the more you bang your head every time something exciting happens.

And the game really was exciting — far better, by all accounts, than the first leg. Leaving aside Belgium's first goal (too painful),

there was the excitement when the ref didn't give a penalty against Ireland (tee-hee); the considerable head-banging burst of joy when Ray Houghton equalised ten minutes into the second half; and then the dubious excitement when the gave a throw-in to the wrong bloke, leading to Belgium's second goal in the 86th minute — an elegant, no-to-say-miraculous, back-to-the-goal, over-the-shoulder chip by Mike Verstraeten that confused Shay Given and left a chance for Nilis to score again.

At this point, the reaction of the drinkers diverged from expectation, becoming oddly familiar from Irish beer commercials. Because, for heaven's sake, like the Murphy's, at 2-1 down, they

were bitter. "No, this is good, Belgium's goal is good for us," a bloke to our left reasoned. "It will make us score again, and then we'll win." He and his mates were having a seminar about the away-goals rule and how it was now in their favour.

So ports fans do this the world over — explain the scoring to each other. It's sweet. On Saturday night, of course, the aggregate system needed thinking about, because a Belgium goal was now worth less than an Ireland goal. Aha. Right. So, in a funny sort of way, by scoring that second goal (and taking the lead), Belgium had virtually handed the game over to

Ireland. I chipped in at this point. "And the thing is, the Belgians can't score again in Ireland, can they?" "Well," he said, "only on their holidays, but that wouldn't count."

Sadly, Belgium's kind-hearted strategy failed in the end, and Ireland did not give them any further luck to speak of. Even when David Connolly was sent off, and Simon reasonably asserted, "down to ten men; that will make them do it", the Irish players failed to take their cue, and suddenly it was all over. The dream had died, and all that.

False dawns had given way to black days. Another pint, Simon? Do that James Joyce thing again. Remind me how you get off this

bar stool. All that. Naturally, one was very sad (and a bit drunk), although I couldn't help thinking of a bloke who told me, in apparent seriousness, that qualifying for the World Cup would just bring a lot of tension to next summer, you know?

"That's a novel way of looking at it," I said. But it's odd: before Saturday, I got the feeling the Irish were fed up with this World Cup already, and weren't unhappy to be spared the extra misery of competing in the finals. Another two years, however, and they'll be ready to try to qualify for the 2000 European championship. Let's just hope that Ireland's own version of McCarthyism doesn't witch-hunt McCarthy before then.

Sports letters may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5211. They should include a daytime telephone number.

Ethics and Formula One

From Mr Nick Bittel

Sir, In all the furore over why the Government took the decision to exempt motor racing from the ban on tobacco sponsorship the actual decision seems to have been largely ignored.

Sport is not merely about employment or foreign earnings. Sport has the ability to inspire. At its best, sport is the stuff of souls. We have a duty as guardians of sport not just to the bottom line but also to those who look to sport for their inspiration.

Sport should stand up clearly and say that accepting tobacco sponsorship is an abrogation of this duty.

Yours faithfully,
NICK BITTEL
(Chief Executive,
London Marathon),
London, SE1
office@mbg.co.uk

From Mr Iain Quick
Sir, Jacques Villeneuve, within seconds of a World Championship, and with numerous wins, makes way for another driver to win his first grand prix race.

Sporting, considerate, mature, tactfully wise? Not a bit of it. That he was alleged to

have been ordered to do so by his team brings your opprobrium heaped upon him, them and the Formula One organisers.

Am I missing something?

Yours faithfully,
IAIN QUICK,
Brook Cottage,
Park Lane,
Gt Holland,
Essex.

From Mr Philip Baker
Sir, A lifelong enthusiast for motor sport in most of its guises, I have been following the unfolding of the Schumacher debacle with growing dismay.

It became apparent many years ago that Formula One, the supposed pinnacle of the sport, had ceased to be a sport at all, but what saddens me now is that it can no longer be bothered to pretend.

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP BAKER,
19 Marley Close,
Aldstone,
Surrey.

From Mr Robin Beare
Sir, The likelihood of collusion between Formula One teams and their drivers, together seeking to fix the result of a grand prix race (Report, November 10), would be much reduced if not eliminated were the Formula One authorities completely to ban radio com-

Blowing the whistle on Premiership referees

From Mr W. Benjamin

Sir, I read Lynne Truss's articles on referees (November 1 and 3) with interest but I am afraid that I disagree with her conclusions.

When did she last see a football match which was not marred in some way or other by the decisions of the officials in charge? Frank Leboeuf was a little nearer the mark (November 1) but do not think things will or can improve until all the Premiership managers get together and insist that offending referees are charged by the FA with bringing the game into disrepute — for that is what they are doing, especially when a game is televised and their incompetence, inconsistency and in some cases apparent bias are there for all to see.

Referees should have to justify their decisions in front of a panel consisting of representatives from the FA management and players and, if the match was televised, then in front of the

viewing public. Only when referees can be seen to be consistent and unbiased will they get the respect that they keep on talking about.

Yours faithfully,
W. BENJAMIN,
7 Bramford Court, High Street, Southgate, London.

From Mr R. Granville

Sir, In Michael Henderson's report of the Bolton-Liverpool game, he refers to referees as having to do their job "for petrol money and a shandy". In fact, Premiership referees get £375 a match plus travel and food expenses. So for an afternoon's work they receive as much as many people in this country receive for working all week.

Yours sincerely,
R. GRANVILLE,
76 Compton Road, Hayes, Middlesex.

From Mrs Sylvia Disley

Sir, I was interested to read Mrs Jan Hartshorn's comments (Sports Letters, November 10) describing Michael Schumacher's "courtesy and politeness when dealing with waiters in the hotel where she worked. However, those waiters should remember that they were not trying to overtake Schumacher in a Formula One race.

Yours faithfully,

SYLVIA DISLEY.

Hampton House,

Upper Sunbury Road,

Hampton, Middlesex.

From Mr David Simpson
Sir, The sooner the pit lane circus that passes as Formula One carries out its threat to disappear to the Far East in a cloud of tyre and cigarette smoke the better for motor sport.

Cheating on the track and fixing the results are incompatible with the concepts of fair play and integrity which legitimise sporting achievement.

DAVID SIMPSON,

10 Ruscombe Gardens,

Datchet, Berkshire.

From Mr Robert Lefroy
Sir, Ferrari did not deserve the 1997 championship as it demonstrated a lamentable lack of planning.

True professionals would follow the lead of American football and use blockers to take the opposition out, ensuring that Schumacher had an untroubled run to the line.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT LEFROY,
Business Money Publications,
Strode House,
Street, Somerset.

From Mr David Eves

Sir, Is Michael Schumacher related to Harald Schumacher, the former West German goalkeeper, who committed the most horrendous foul on Patric Battiston in the World Cup semi-final in Seville in 1982 to prevent France reaching the final, but was not even shown a yellow card, let alone a red one? Was that also an "accident"?

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE CARVER,

(PAT Senior Professional Officer),

2 St James' Court, Friar Gate, Derby.

From Mr M. Molony

Sir, Is there an honour bestowed on golfers obtaining an albatross? I know of the Hole-In-One Society and the Ferret Club but not of an Albatross Club. Recently a junior member at my club, Leatherhead, shot a two at our first hole — par five — and incidentally shot a three on our 16th — par five.

Yours faithfully,

M. MOLONY.

18 Carew Court, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4JL, UK.

From Mr Geoff Carver
Sir, The Professional Association of Teachers is seriously concerned that the football academies to be created by Premiership clubs will pre-

vent pupils from playing football for their school teams, seriously damaging inter-school sports. The amount of training and travelling time will also have a detrimental effect on their education.

Education should not, and must not, take second place to apparent attempts by some wealthy clubs to secure talent for themselves. Few of the pupils selected will make it as professionals. Those who do not will have their education disrupted and could miss out on important qualifications.

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY CARVER,
(PAT Senior Professional Officer),
2 St James' Court, Friar Gate, Derby.

Albatross award

From Mr M. Molony

THE TIMES

No firm favourites as 14 teams tee off at La Manga

By MEL WEBB

THE DIVERSITY of the winning teams in the regional final series of the leading corporate golf tournament in the British Isles knocked the stuffing out of the Orwellian assertion that all are created equal, but some are more equal than others.

A total of 1,404 amateur golfers entered *The Times* MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge. Representing 351 teams, they took part in the 14-event qualifying competition for the right to play in the national final, in Spain this week.

When they step on to the first tee on the South Course at La Manga on Thursday for the first of two rounds, it will not matter if they are representing small, local firms or huge, multinational concerns.

The Challenge is designed to be all things to all corporate entities. If the regional finals are an indicator, that aim was realised brilliantly last month.

For instance, the Northern England regional final at Slaley Hall early in October was won by Derry Landscapes and Garden Design, Leeds-based garden designers and builders. Not even Peter Jepson, the firm's owner and captain of its team, would claim that his company was in the same financial league as Citibank, the New York-based banking giant, who won the Central Home Counties event at Duke's Dene. But, when the going gets tough in La Manga, global status will count for nothing.

Therein, perhaps, lies one of the enduring charms of this competition and within it, too, one of the great strengths of the game itself. In golf, all truly are equal.

In no other game can the rabbit give the tiger a decent



match, thanks to the wonders of the handicap system. At La Manga there will be 24-handicappers and low single-figure men, and the modest performer is just as likely to be a member of the winning team as the highly talented one.

The handicap allowance for the Challenge was changed this year from seven-eighths to three-quarters of handicap. This has produced closer finishes and made scores tougher to acquire, as well as ending the anomalous granting of two shots on certain holes to high-handicap players. This was a good, positive step; the competition is the better for it.

The practice of putting the four players in each team out

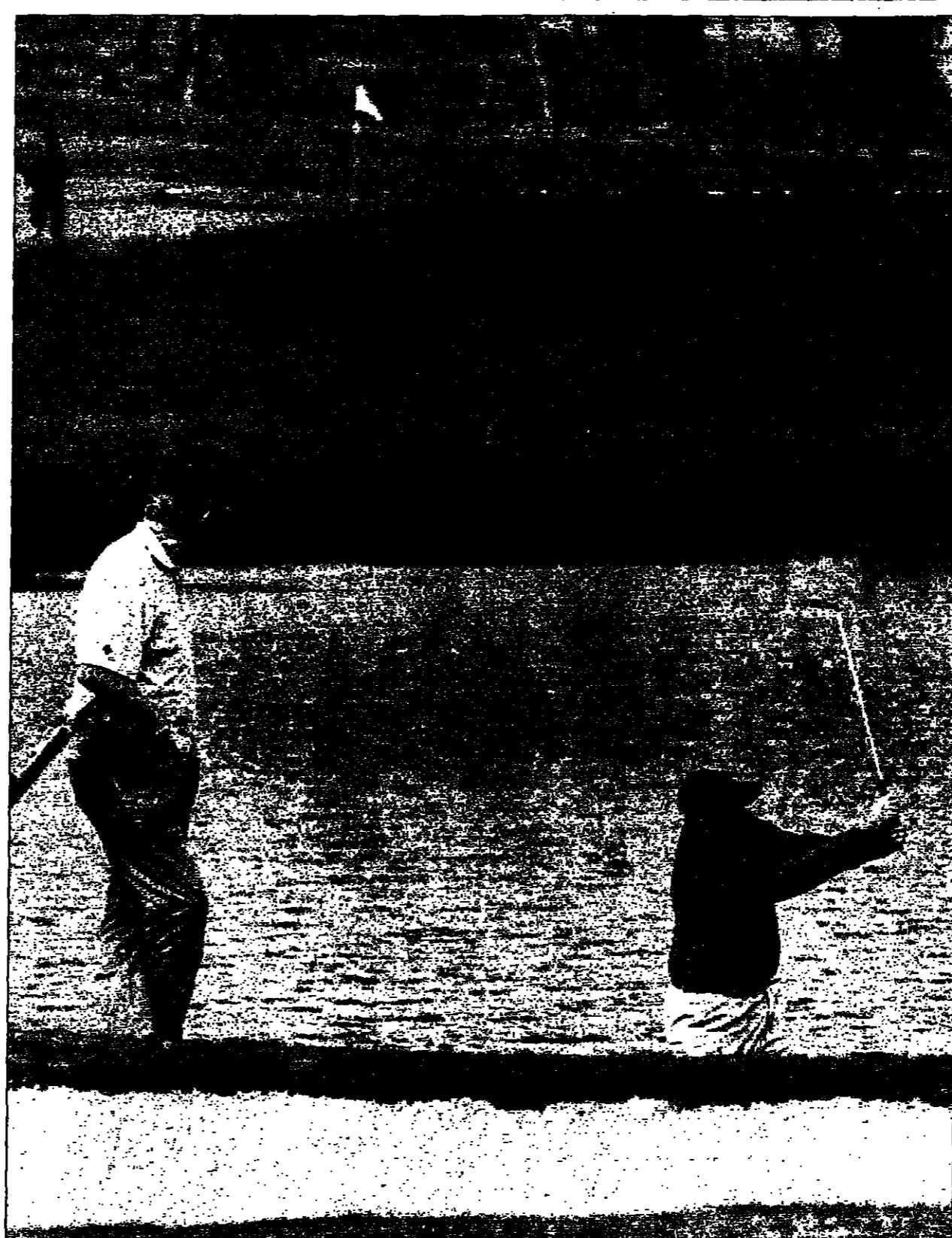


Northern Ireland: McClure Watters
Ireland: AGF Irish Life Holdings
East Midlands: Orchard Toys
North England: Derry Landscapes Ltd
Scotland: Shandow Leisure
North West: Anglo Hot Construction
West and West Devonport Management Ltd
West Midlands: West Bromwich Building Society
Western Home Counties: Opus 4 Integrated
Northern Home Counties: Ora Electronics Ltd
Eastern Home Counties and Anglia: Drakes Group Ltd
South East: Duracell Batteries
Central Home Counties: Citibank NA
South Eastern Home Counties: Archer Leisure

The Challenge has set a standard during the past five years to which others aspire, and part of that standard lies in the quality of the regional final venues. Some of the finest courses in the British Isles were visited, including, for the first time, the K Club, near Dublin, which is sure to be among the frontrunners to be the chosen venue when the Ryder Cup goes to Ireland in 2005.

Only one of the magnificent 14 teams will be making a return visit to La Manga: two members of the Drakes Group team, winners at Brocket Hall, represented the company there in 1995. Their small local knowledge will be a potent weapon.

Or, perhaps, no use at all. They have a chance to be more equal than the others — only time will tell.



The Ireland regional final was held at the K Club, near Dublin, a possible venue for the Ryder Cup in 2005



Revised second round draw

to be played on or before DECEMBER 13, 1997
Bury v Nottingham Forest
Blackpool v Everton
Leicester v Liverpool
Bury
v Peterborough or Doncaster
Aston Villa or Notts County v Wales
Bradford v Bolton
Shrewsbury v Stoke or Wolverhampton
Sheffield Utd v Tranmere
Sunderland v Crewe
Leeds v Oldham
York v Middlesbrough
West Bromwich v Manchester City
Newcastle v Burnley
Blackburn v Manchester Utd
Walton and Hersham or Rushden and Diamonds v Charlton
Southampton v Histon
West Ham v Millwall
Torquay or Leyton Orient v Bristol City
Watford v Croydon or Northampton
Norwich v Crystal Palace
Enfield v Swindon or Bristol Rovers
Chelsea v Wimbledon
Portsmouth v Erith and Belvedere
Ipswich v Crawley or Great Wakering
Swansea or Bedford v Brentford
Exeter v Arsenal
Queens Park Rangers v Southend
Tottenham v Reading
Coventry v Luton
Plymouth v Fulham
Wycombe v Welling or Dulwich
Woking or Brighton v Gillingham

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THE TIMES

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Starting today, *The Times* launches its Christmas collection of traditional carols and music that captures the mood of the festive season. There are five CDs at only £1.98 each (£2.98 in Eire and EC). When you buy all five, you are given the sixth, highlights from Handel's *Messiah*, FREE.

The free CD is performed by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Scottish Philharmonic Singers. Excerpts include *Hallelujah* (chorus), *Worthy Is The Lamb That Was Slain* (chorus), *Comfort Ye My People* (recit) and *The Trumpet Shall Sound* (air).

Every day this week we will feature a different title from the set. The first is: *Christmas with St Paul's Cathedral Choir*, accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor John Scott. They perform a programme of 13 familiar and lesser known carols (listed below).

With 75 tracks adding up to almost five hours of music, the six CDs provide the perfect background music for your seasonal celebrations.

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TRACK LISTING:

Fantasy on Christmas Carols (The Holly and The Ivy); *Sleepers, Wake*; *The Sussex Mummers' Christmas Carol*; *A Legend*; *A Spotless Rose*; *Sleigh Ride*; *The Noble Stem of Jesse*; *Es Ist Ein Ros Entsprungen*; *A Christmas Sequence*; *Bethlehem Down*; *A Maid Peerless*; *A New Year Carol*; *Christmas Day*.



TODAY'S CD: *Christmas with St Paul's Cathedral Choir*

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CHANGING TIMES

RACING: JOCKEY BREAKS WRIST 24 HOURS AFTER RIDING SENOR EL BETRUTTI TO FAMOUS VICTORY

Osborne falls foul of Murphy's Law

BY RICHARD EVANS
RACING CORRESPONDENT

HERO one day, fall guy the next. Just 24 hours after Jamie Osborne had partnered Senor El Betratti to a 33-1 giant-killing success in the Murphy's Gold Cup, the jockey ended up in Cheltenham General Hospital yesterday with a broken left wrist.

The injury came when he was unseated by Space Truck, four fences from home in the Mitsubishi Shogun Novice Novices' Chase and is likely to put the rider, 30, out of action for at least a month.

With 16 winners under his belt already this season, Osborne has been riding as stylishly and effectively as ever. Now he must sit and

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: Native Shore

(12.50 Leicester)

Native Shore has been placed to pension by Charlie Mann and the looks to have found another ideal opportunity for his managing mare in the opening at Leicester. She can complete a four-year

Next Best: Potter's Gale

(22.0 Leicester)

suffer during a formative period of the National Hunt calendar. No words — or music — will soften the blow.

I mention music because, in a notable break with tradition, Cheltenham yesterday adopted racing's equivalent of music while you work. Before each race, "mood music" was played to spectators in the shape of *Overture* and *a Prisoner of the Crusades* (*From Chains to Freedom*).

Having consulted the necessary form book, it appears this particular track came from the film *Robin Hood Prince Of Thieves*. Perhaps it was intended as a subliminal message to punters about robbing the rich (bookmakers) to give to the poor (themselves).

After each race a different



Mr Percy, ridden by Philip Hinde, holds a decisive advantage at the last in the Murphy's Draughtflow Hurdle at Cheltenham yesterday

track accompanied the victorious horses as they entered the winner's enclosure much more upbeat, even triumphant in tone. And so *Tidal Force* was greeted by *Search For The Hero* by M People after winning the opening Lincoln Mill Cigars Gloucestershire CC Novices' Hurdle. In this case the hero was Richard Dunwoody for giving the Philip Hobbs-trained six-year-old such a cracking ride.

Eye Of The Tiger by Survivor boomed out into the evening gloom when Spendid sent punters home happy after the even money favourite had

overcome some sloppy handling to win the race.

The possibilities are endless, although Cheltenham may have missed a trick when The French Furze won the "Come Greyhound Racing" Juvenile Novices' Hurdle in archetypal Martin Pipe style by making all the running to win comfortably and earn a 25-1 quote for the Triumph Hurdle. Instead of an offering by a group calling themselves The Water Boys, *I Did It My Way* by Frank Sinatra may have been more appropriate for the champion trainer's 83rd success of the season.

Just what the National Hunt jockeys will make of all this is unclear, although Edward Gillespie, managing director at Cheltenham, was encouraged. With tongue firmly in cheek, he said: "Traditionalists are already looking sour — which means it is a good idea."

He added: "This initiative was decided after discussions with our sponsors to make today feel different. Friday is the day when people wear their grandparents' suits and Cheltenham is as it used to be. Saturday is up-front racing. Today we are pointing out

how things might be in the future."

"I am expecting quite a lot of people to be surprised at our musical accompaniment and we will consider introducing it on other appropriate days, like January 1, though not at the National Hunt Festival. In the future, I would like the jockeys to choose their favourite tracks from a Cheltenham play list."

In the feature race, the Murphy's Draughtflow Hurdle, Mr Percy could be the winner at least two flights from home. Given his form with the likes of Shadow Leader and

Marella last term, it was not surprising that the Josh Gifford runner was backed down from 20-1 to 14-1 after a good prep race behind Pridwell a week ago.

David Roe, owner of the winner and sponsor of Gifford's Findon horse, bought a horse for £10,000 from Tom Costello three years ago but after a problem had arisen with vets' certificates, because the horse had cataracts, Costello offered him a replacement — in the shape of Mr Percy. *I Should Be So Lucky* by Kylie Minogue sounds about right.

LEICESTER

THUNDERER

1.20 Dolce Notte 2.20 Star Selection
1.20 Brecon 2.50 Herbert Lodge
1.50 The Whole Hog 3.20 Joe Shaw
3.50 Ainsi Soit Il

Timkeeper's top rating: 1.20 COINTOSSER.

GUIDE TO OUR IN-LINE RACECARD

101 1131-42 GOOD TIMES 13 (BF, G3) (M) D. Ratton, B. Hee 12-2 ... B. West 17-2

Second runner: Su-juju (Iona F-H, 4th, P-1) — winner, SF — beaten successive 4th (last race) pulled up. 3rd — second (Iona F-H, 5th, P-1) — beaten 4th (last race) pulled up. 4th — second (Iona F-H, 6th, P-1) — beaten 5th (last race) pulled up. 5th — beaten 6th (last race) pulled up. 6th — beaten 7th (last race) pulled up. 7th — beaten 8th (last race) pulled up. 8th — beaten 9th (last race) pulled up. 9th — beaten 10th (last race) pulled up. 10th — beaten 11th (last race) pulled up. 11th — beaten 12th (last race) pulled up. 12th — beaten 13th (last race) pulled up. 13th — beaten 14th (last race) pulled up. 14th — beaten 15th (last race) pulled up. 15th — beaten 16th (last race) pulled up. 16th — beaten 17th (last race) pulled up. 17th — beaten 18th (last race) pulled up. 18th — beaten 19th (last race) pulled up. 19th — beaten 20th (last race) pulled up. 20th — beaten 21st (last race) pulled up. 21st — beaten 22nd (last race) pulled up. 22nd — beaten 23rd (last race) pulled up. 23rd — 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"Now all I want is a single board and a wide open mountain" — Victoria Walker discovers snowboarding



Regular or goofy? Victoria Walker stands on the board (which she describes as a "small ironing board") at a 90 degree angle to the front. The leading leg is the one closest to the front. Left-footed riders are called regular and right-footed, goofy

It simply takes great attitude

Snowboarding takes attitude. With his fashionable sideburns and neatly trimmed goatee, my instructor at the Tamworth Snowdome, John Sewell, oozed it. He advocated it, too: "The main thing is a positive attitude. It will not work for you if you are tense. You must have confidence in yourself."

This wasn't just bravado. Like surfing or skiing, the key to success is balance. Good posture is paramount; if you are tense and lean too far forward or too far back (in the mistaken belief that the closer you get to the ground, the less it will hurt if you fall), you will tumble.

Snowboards are about a foot across, and when stood on end should reach somewhere between your chest and nose.

Longer boards tend to be harder to manoeuvre for novices. Unlike a skier, the snowboard rider stands on the board at a 90 degree angle to the front. The leading leg is the one closest to the front of the board. Left-footed people are called regular and, for reasons quite beyond me, right-footed riders are called goofy. (I feel a little sensitive about these terms and am not saying if I am right or left-footed.)

Curiously enough, before standing on me what I thought resembled a small ironing board, Sewell informed me that my first lesson was to involve some role reversal — I was to be the instructor guiding him down the slope. After my initial surprise, I saw that he wanted me to walk with him so that I could clearly see what he expected me to do.



Holding on to Sewell's hands, I walked in front of him as he demonstrated how to catch and release the toe edge of his board in the snow. This is called a side-slip. The board remains square to the slope, with the rider facing downhill. Sewell then repeated this exercise, facing up the slope and facing up to "parallels". But you

digging with his heel edge. Although this felt a little strange initially, it was quite an easy technique to master, simply involving raising toes or heels.

The second task I was to learn was the aptly named "falling-leaf". The descent of the slope by the rider is similar to that of an autumn leaf as it falls from a tree and glides to the ground in a gentle zigzag pattern. Traversing the slope with pressure on either my toe or heel edge I made my hesitant, slow way back and forth down the hill.

The wonderful thing was that after only ten minutes I was, effectively, snowboarding. Novice skiers must endure days on end of mastering technical skills such as the "snowplough" before graduating on to "parallels". But you

can't do snowploughs on a single board. So although there is much to learn and leading boarders can perform breathtaking feats, it did not seem to me as technically demanding as skiing.

Sewell then taught me how to traverse the breadth of the 30-metre slope before gently nudging me into a "straight" — facing directly downhill rather than meandering from side-to-side. In the sport's organic terminology these techniques are linked to form "garlands".

After an hour-long lesson it would be wrong to say that I could snowboard — I had still to master turns, for example, but I felt I was well on the way. Skiing, I have decided, is for foot-fobs. For me, all I want is a single board and a wide open mountain. It appears I am not alone with such sentiments. "I will never go back to skiing," said Drew Roberts, 22, who has been snowboarding for almost three years.

Simon Smith is 25 and has been skiing for ten years. Two months ago he tried snowboarding for the first time and is hooked. "I found it quite easy to make the change from skiing to boarding," he said. "I was getting bored with skiing



For the learner, snowboarding is not as demanding as skiing

and wanted to try something new."

One of the most surprising things about snowboarding is just how civilised the kit is. The board is easy to carry. After having proved myself a

just like a commuter carrying a rolled-up copy of *The Times* — well almost.

The boots, too, bear more resemblance to my favourite pair of walking boots than the hard and inflexible ski-boot. Padded, warm, with a well-marked tread and lace-ups, the boots clip into fixings attached to the board. I found I was comfortable walking both on snow and indoors with none of the ridiculous slow-motion "moonwalking" that ski-boots impose.

The clothing should keep you warm and dry, so gloves, waterproof, padded trousers and jackets are a must. The strength of the snowboarding culture means that there is a wealth of fashionable gear. Many of the snowboarding labels are leading the way in ski-wear design. The clothing I wore came from Snowboard Asylum, though normal ski-gear is also fine for snowboarding. Salopettes with reinforced knees and bottoms are a good idea because they tend to get more wear and tear. Many snowboarders also like to wear longer jackets to ensure their bottoms stay warm and dry.

Don't let a lack of snow hold you back

By VICTORIA WALKER

YOU DO not have to invest in a board, all the gear and an expensive holiday in the Alps or the Rockies to try snowboarding. Many dry ski slopes offer snowboard lessons and hire out equipment. The British Snowboarding Association (BSA) is the official governing body and holds details on snowboarding facilities throughout Britain.

Prices vary, but tend to be reasonable. Southampton Ski & Snowboard Centre offers a two-day beginners' course for £40. Experienced riders can use the slope for £6.30 an hour and hire boards for an additional £2.

At Tamworth Snowdome, where I had my first lesson, you can learn on man-made snow from £22.50 an hour for adults and £17.50 for children (non-members) or £15.75 an hour for adults and £12.25 for children (members). This includes the hire of the board and boots.

Aviemore has expansive ski and snowboard runs and a snowboard school providing instruction and equipment hire. A two-day beginner's package costs £70 and includes board hire, lift passes and four hours of lessons.

If you would prefer to look before you leap and simply watch an experienced rider in action, the Sprite Demo Tour (0171-336 6666; Southampton Ski & Snowboard Centre (01703 790970); Tamworth Snowdome (01827 67905); Cairngorm Ski Area, Aviemore (01479 86126)). Entry is free and the next date is at Warmwell, Dorset on November 30.

Skateboarders aiming higher and higher

By IVO TENNANT

According to those who have ridden the "vert ramp" and the street skate course, it is the most difficult of all sports to master. This is not officially recognised and it will never become an Olympic event. Yet for an exacting level of technique allied to sheer guts and gumption, skateboarding is regarded by many participants as the *non-pareil*.

What is often construed as no more than an irritating activity on pavements and footpaths by callow youths is, along with snowboarding, an increasingly attractive sport for young people. The Board X Festival '97, held in Battersea Park over the last three days and sponsored by *The Times*, attracted around 10,000 spectators. Many were novices who progress, in due course, to the ski slopes.

It is more than 15 years since a bunch of surfers from California took their boards up a mountain and reckoned that coming down on them was more fun than sitting on a tea tray. Hence snowboarding was born. This has progressed to the point at which it will be included in the next Winter Olympics in Japan. Skateboarding is another matter.

Indeed, there is no particular desire to have it classified as a recognised sport at all.

There are obvious similarities. Snowboarding is visible on mountain slopes all over the world: it is estimated that by the turn of the century there will be as many boarders as skiers. Some ski resorts do not permit them, owing to a perception that the activity is dangerous, but most of the participants, those in the 18-26 age range, do not concern themselves with that.



A competitor in last week's Board X Festival in London

As with snowboarding, there is an incessant desire to jump higher and higher. Rune Clifberg, from California, who is regarded as one of the best skaters in the world, demonstrated as much indoors when the outdoor competition at Battersea was postponed on Friday and again on Saturday owing to rain.

The popularity is such that courses are being built all over the country. Not the least of the attractions is a link to fashion (markedly casual), music and a relaxed lifestyle and jargon. A skateboard is still relatively cheap, even if a snowboard is not. Skiing, by contrast, is seen

SNOWBOARD CONTACTS

British Snowboarding Association, 1st floor, 4 Trinity Square, Llandudno, North Wales, LL30 2PY (0192 872540); Sprite Demo Tour (0171-336 6666; Southampton Ski & Snowboard Centre (01703 790970); Tamworth Snowdome (01827 67905); Cairngorm Ski Area, Aviemore (01479 86126)). Entry is free and the next date is at Warmwell, Dorset on November 30.

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

Deception is one of the hardest parts of the game, particularly when defending, as there is always the risk that partner will be more misled than declarer. One of the best times to try to mislead declarer is when you have all of the defensive assets. Today's hand is taken from a new book, *Expert Defence*, by Raymond Brock, a follow-on from his earlier *Step by Step: Planning the Defence*.

Dealer South **East-West game** **IMPs**

♦K1075	N	♦J6
♦K	W	♦8765
♦1084	E	♦J732
♦Q942	S	♦863
♦84		
♦A4		
♦A		
♦K107		

Contract: Three No-Trumps by South. Lead: Five of spades.

This deal occurred in the final of the 1995 World Junior Championship. The British declarer in the Closed Room played in Four Hearts. He lost two top spades and a spade ruff and then had no reason not to take the heart finesse, and thus went one down.

In the Open Room the New Zealanders reached Three No-Trumps and it looked to the VuGraph audience that the declarer would have to succeed. With the defenders threatening to take four spade tricks as soon as they got the lead he would have no option but to play both his long suits from the top and when the king of hearts dropped he would have ten tricks.

However, Justin Hackett found the excellent opening lead of the five of spades (systemically fourth best). As that was the lowest spade

outstanding, declarer thought that the spades were breaking 4-3. In which case he had a much better play for his game and that is what he tried. He played the queen of hearts, expecting it to hold the trick. Then he would revert to clubs. As long as the defence had only three spades to cash he would make his contract whenever clubs were 4-3 or the queen dropped doubleton or the king of hearts was singleton or doubleton. Unfortunately for him Justin won his king of hearts and cashed four spade tricks.

□ *Expert Defence* is available direct from the publishers, B.T. Batsford, on 01376 321276, price £9.99 (£1 p&p).

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

RUESSSEC
a. Sweet white wine
b. An 8th-century French Cardinal
c. The Larvian Foreign Office

JOY GEAR
a. Light aircraft controls
b. A locomotive operating device
c. Masseuse's appliances

HENDERSON GYRO
a. Naval gunnery aid
b. A private savings bank
c. An early wingless aircraft

CACCIA
a. Confetti
b. Fruit syrup
c. A musical form

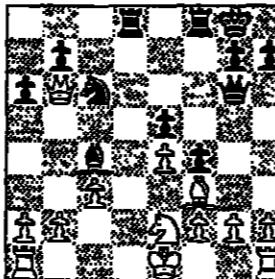
Answers on page 47

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Miles - Speelman, Islington Open 1970. Black has invested a pawn in an attempt to exploit White's slight lack of development. How did he now make the most of his chances?

Solution on page 47



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Mr Cr	Company	Price	Wk	Mo	Yo	PE
5,420,000	Alfred Dunhill	52	+ 28	48	122	20
1,170,000	Amesbury	43	+ 12	43	117	14
3,250,000	Amesbury A	97	+ 10	97	100	14
11,240,000	Amesbury B	56	+ 21	54	110	14
1,190,000	Amesbury C	21	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury D	21	+ 14	13	65	14
4,250,000	Amesbury E	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury F	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury G	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury H	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury I	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury J	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury K	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury L	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury M	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury N	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury O	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury P	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury Q	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury R	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury S	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury T	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury U	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury V	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury W	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury X	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury Y	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury Z	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury AA	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury BB	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury CC	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury DD	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury EE	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury FF	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury GG	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury HH	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury II	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury JJ	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury KK	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury LL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury MM	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury NN	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury OO	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury PP	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury QQ	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury RR	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury SS	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury TT	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury UU	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury VV	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury WW	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury XX	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury YY	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury ZZ	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury AAA	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury BBB	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury CCC	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury DDD	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury EEE	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury FFF	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury GGG	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury HHH	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury III	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury JJJ	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury KKK	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury LLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury MLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury NLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury OLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury PLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury QLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury RLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury SLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury TLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury ULL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury VLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury WLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury XLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury YLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury ZLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury AA	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury BB	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury CC	14	+ 14	13	65	14
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1,172,000	Amesbury KK	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury LL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury MLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury NLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury OLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury PLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury QLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury RLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury SLL	14	+ 14	13	65	14
1,172,000	Amesbury TLL	14	+ 14</			

Granada set to shine at top end of forecasts



Charles Allen will be pressed for news of Granada disposals, such as Grosvenor House

GRANADA: The media and leisure group, has a habit of accompanying results with big deals — witness the hostile bid for Forte two years ago. This time, the City wants disposals news, but the message seems to be "Don't hold your breath".

The on-off sale of Grosvenor House in Park Lane, London, seems to have become bogged down at the negotiating table, and a solution to the Savoy conundrum seems as far off as ever. The only hope rests with the £80 million-plus French motorway services business, on which an announcement is rated an "outside chance" by industry observers.

Nevertheless, Gerry Robinson, the chairman, and Charles Allen, chief executive, will not disappoint. Thursday's full-year results are likely to be at the top end of analysts' £630 million to £650 million forecasts — up from £480 million — bolstered by strong results at Forte and a sturdy television advertising market. Television operations should also be boosted by the acquisition of Yorkshire-Tyne Tees in June. Granada is also expected to claim that the £100 million of profit improvement controversially promised during the Forte bid has been surpassed by at least 20 per

cent. The total dividend will rise from 3p to about 14.5p.

VODAPONE: The group is likely to consolidate its position as Britain's biggest mobile phone operator in half-year figures tomorrow. Estimates of pre-tax profits range from £280 million to £285 million, up from £235 million in last year's first half. The group earlier this year bought several service providers and it has wasted little time in restructuring them, for which a £20 million provision will be set aside this time. The strongest growth will be in international operations, with their new subscribers up significantly. The payout is likely to rise, in line with previous years, by 20 per cent to 2.83p.

BRITISH STEEL: Half-year figures this morning will show the impact of a strong pound. Last year, the group made pre-tax profits of £262 million, but the outcome this time could be anything between £70 million and £120 million.

Sterling's strength will also have accelerated the redundancy programme. Brokers say that up to a quarter of the 40,000 workforce may be involved in the restructuring. Currency drove profits down from a record £1.1 billion to £628 million, from £50.6 million. This is in spite of the poorly economy in France — where Emap is the second-largest magazine publisher and the intended chief executive, Kevin Hand, runs things. Consumer publishing is also exciting, with *FHM*, the men's monthly, leaving the likes of *GQ* and *Loaded* in its wake. The outgoing chief executive, Robin Miller, will be questioned about Emap's stance on IPC, the consumer publisher

put up for sale by Reed Elsevier for £800 million. Emap is unlikely to say much more than it already has, and the feeling is that others may be able to offer more for IPC.

SAFEWAY: Brokers expect disappointing half-year results on Wednesday.

Mike Dennis, of Société Générale Strauss-Turnbull, says that it is almost as if the group has primed the City to expect a dull set of figures. He is looking for pre-tax profits of £235 million, against £230 million.

Sales growth will have been flat and the chances are that the group may have continued to lose market share to J Sainsbury, Tesco and Asda.

Brokers will no doubt want an indication of how Safeway intends to get sales lines moving if a better performance is expected for the second half. However, against last year's dull post-Christmas backdrop, improvement should not be too hard. After the breakdown of merger talks with Asda, Safeway will no doubt be required to outline its strategy.

The payout should grow by 5 per cent to 4.6p.

STOREHOUSE: The annual meeting earlier this year was reasonably encouraging on sales growth, but this will have altered after dull trading conditions in August and September. Nick Bubb, of SocGen, says that October was better, but that it is unlikely to have let the group make up all the lost ground. He forecasts £39 million interim pre-tax profits on Thursday, midway in a market range of £38 million to £40 million. Last year, the group made £37.5 million. Headline sales growth should

at first sight, appear impressive, but after a contribution from the Childrens World acquisition is stripped out, the overall performance will leave much to be desired.

Bhs and Mothercare continue to struggle. Mr Bubb says that the market positioning of Bhs continues to cause concern, and Mothercare is losing its share of a flat market.

The interim dividend

should grow from 3.3p to 3.5p.

UNIGATE: A solid performance is expected in results today. The all-important dairy division will have seen a recovery in margins last year, and the expanded pigmeat processing activities should make a useful contribution.

Henderson Crosthwaite, the broker, forecasts pre-tax profits of about £67 million, up from £60.6 million. The Wincanton transport division is back on track, with new contracts. Steadier pricing in retailing and manufacturing should limit damage to the profit and loss account.

The payout should rise 6 per cent, to 7.4p.

NORTHERN FOODS: Henderson Crosthwaite expects pre-tax profits tomorrow up from £57.8 million to £68 million. The market range is between £64 million and £69 million. Henderson says the dairy side should be £5 million up, at £27 million, with lower milk costs boosting doorstep margins. Paribas says the real benefit of the penny put on a pint earlier this year is unlikely to be felt till the second half. The payout will rise almost 6 per cent, to 3.8p.

MICHAEL CLARK

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Two clues awaited on interest rates

TWO key British statistical releases will this week give further clues on prospects for interest rates in the months ahead. Last week's Bank of England *Inflation Report* left the question of whether rates have now peaked ambiguous but ominously said that the Monetary Policy Committee was not "in a pause" in the process of monetary tightening.

With continuing strong growth in consumer demand and money supply cited as two of the main reasons behind the recent rise in base rates, this week's figures for retail sales and money supply are key. October's retail sales figures are published on Wednesday. According to the consensus of market forecasts compiled by MMS International, sales are expected to have risen 1.8 per cent, giving year-on-year growth of 5.1 per cent, compared with a drop in sales volumes in September of 1.9 per cent and a year-on-year rate of 3.4 per cent.

October figures for M4 money supply are published on Thursday and are expected to show growth in broad money of 0.5 per cent. This would mean the annual rate of growth dipping somewhat to 11.2 per cent from 11.5 per cent in September but this rate is still far too high for comfort within the MPC. The Bank said last week that "money growth must slow if the inflation target is to be met".

Also published in Britain this week are October figures for the public sector borrowing requirement as well as the latest monthly trends survey from the Confederation of British Industry. The latter will be keenly watched for signs of any impact of sterling's appreciation on export volumes and orders.

JANET BUSH

RESULTS AND STATISTICS

TODAY

Interims: British Steel, Emap, Firstbus, Lyons Irish Holdings, SAB Miller, TBL, Budget, Whitbread, Worksafe, Great Western, Gloucester Holdings. Economic statistics: US October industrial production.

TOMORROW

Interims: Adam & Harvey, Chamberlin & Hill, James Cropper, De La Rue, Enterprise Inns, Gaff Thomson Environmental, Great Portland Estates, GKN, GKN Maritime, Hall Group, Northern Foods, Rebus Group, Vodafone Group, Vosper Thornycroft, Financie BOC, Glasgow Income Trust, Economic statistics: UK October PSBR, Bank of England to give details of November 26 gilt auction.

WEDNESDAY

Interims: Black Arrow Group, Courtaulds, Dawson International, European Container Motor, Hovis, FKI, Fisons, Land Securities, Irnica, Mayer International, Robert Wiseman Darley, Safeway, Southwells, Finlays, Century Inns, Ferraris Group, Economic statistics: UK October retail sales, CBI Council press conference, US October housing starts.

THURSDAY

Interims: Baring Stratton, Investors, (pre) Bradford Property Trust, Crichton Group, Cheltenham Leisure Group, Glamorgan, Hillingdon, Lambert Fenchurch Group, EDMAN, Powell Duffryn, PowerGen, Stobart House, Shires Income, Vocaris Group, York Waterworks, Finlays, Tewkesbury, Economic statistics: UK October car production, UK q3 provisional GDP, Building Societies Association October lending, CBI November industrial trends survey.

FRIDAY

Interims: Osborne & Little, Wai-Kong Shipping.

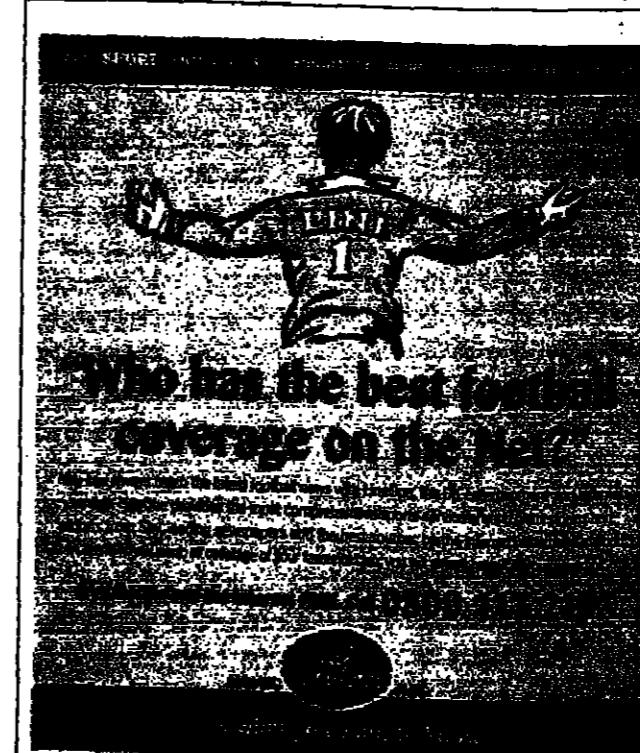
SUNDAY TIPS

The Sunday Times: Buy British Steel, Mayflower, Sigma, Workspace; Sell Manchester United. The Sunday Telegraph: Buy Capital Radio, Five Oaks Investment; Sell Lotus Road, DCC; Hold Videologic. The Mail on Sunday: Buy Abacus Recruitment, Gibbon Group; Sell Lloyds TSB. The Observer: Buy Safeway; Sell JXN. The Express on Sunday: Buy Ryland, BPP Holdings; Hold BT.

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Zambian
industry
booms

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asts

After eight years in business, the Chinese-owned mining group is struggling to meet its performance targets and the market is becoming increasingly competitive. The group's strategy is to build a diversified portfolio of assets and focus on the long-term growth of its share of a global market. The group's chairman, Mr. Li, has said that the group should grow from its current size of \$1 billion to \$5 billion by 2002.

UNIGATE: A major food and drink company, it is currently in a difficult position. The company's diversification strategy has not been successful and the market is becoming increasingly competitive. The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

SOUTHERN LONDON: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

MARSH & LEAR: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

RESULTS AND STATISTICS: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

TONIGHT: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

WEDNESDAY: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

THURSDAY: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

FRIDAY: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

SUNDAY: The group's chairman, Mr. John Gutfreund, has said that the company should focus on its core business of food and drink.

SOLUTIONS

Turnover (1996): \$8.4 billion
Pre-tax profit: \$1.7 billion
Employees: 51,000

OVERVIEW: The world's biggest mining group. Operations span aluminium, borates, coal, copper, gold, iron ore and titanium dioxide. Anglo-Australian structure reflects combination of RTZ and CRA, which merged in December 1995 and changed name to Rio Tinto in June 1997. Shares hit hard by Asian currency turmoil and plunging copper price. Planning horizons span 20 years or more. Quotes in US dollars.

THE BOARD

Robert (Bob) Wilson, formerly chief executive of RTZ-CRA, and executive chairman of the combined group since January 1997, succeeded Sir Derek Gairn. An economist by training, Wilson joined RTZ in 1976 at the age of 26, and has held a wide variety of positions within the company. Aged 54, Wilson's main cohort include Leon Davis, chief executive, representing the CRA camp, and Chris Bell, group finance director. Davis joined CRA from school in 1956 as a metallurgical cadet and has worked in Papua New Guinea, and elsewhere in Asia.

NON-executive directors: Raymond Seitz, the former American Ambassador to the United Kingdom, who is also on the board of British Airways.

Richard Giordano, American-born chairman of BG and Centrica, who holds non-executive positions with Grand Metropolitan and Lucas Industries.

The Australian contingent includes John Uhlig, former chairman of CRA, and chairman of Westpac, and Gary Pemberton, another well-connected businessman, who is chairman of Qantas, and hence knows Seitz via the BA connection.

Sir Martin Jacobson, chairman of the audit committee, is former chairman of BZW, and chairman of the British Council and Prudential Corporation. He also sits on the board of Marks & Spencer.

Newcomers include Sir Richard Sykes, chairman and chief executive of Glaxo Wellcome, and Lord Tugendhat, chairman of Abbey National and Blue Circle Industries. They were appointed in August, in part replacing Lord Simon of Highbury, latterly chairman of BP, who relinquished his directorships on his appointment as Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe.

For a company that earns its crust blasting great chunks out of the earth, Rio Tinto has endured an appropriately seismic year. Recent months have brought changes of name, industrial disputes, and a sudden fall in the share price.

The board, led by Bob Wilson and Leon Davis, has persevered with reworking a group that is still fundamentally two companies, one with a power base in St James's Square, London; the other in Melbourne.

To many, the world's biggest mining group will always be RTZ, but Rio Tinto is the more appropriate name. It combines the common features of two mining companies that have been linked for years — The Rio Tinto-Zinc Corporation and Conzinc Riotinto of Australia.

If 1996 consolidated the merger of RTZ-CRA, then 1997 was the year in which to polish this rough cut into an altogether more alluring gem.

Enthusiastic Rio Tinto conjures up a Boy's Own world, filled with mile-long trains and vast open-pit mines — among the biggest man-made workings anywhere. At Grasberg in Irian Jaya in Indonesia, engineers are peeling back the top of a 14,000 ft mountain, contending with hostile atmospheric conditions, including cloud and torrential rain. Tailings laced with copper, gold and silver are channelled to a mill at 9,000 ft and hence by pipeline to the coast ready to be shipped out.

At Diavik in Canada's North-West Territories, engineers are probing one of the world's most exciting new diamond discoveries, secreted beneath a frozen lake. In between are huge opencast workings in America, Chile and Australia, and controversial sand-dune excavations near Lake St Lucia in South Africa.

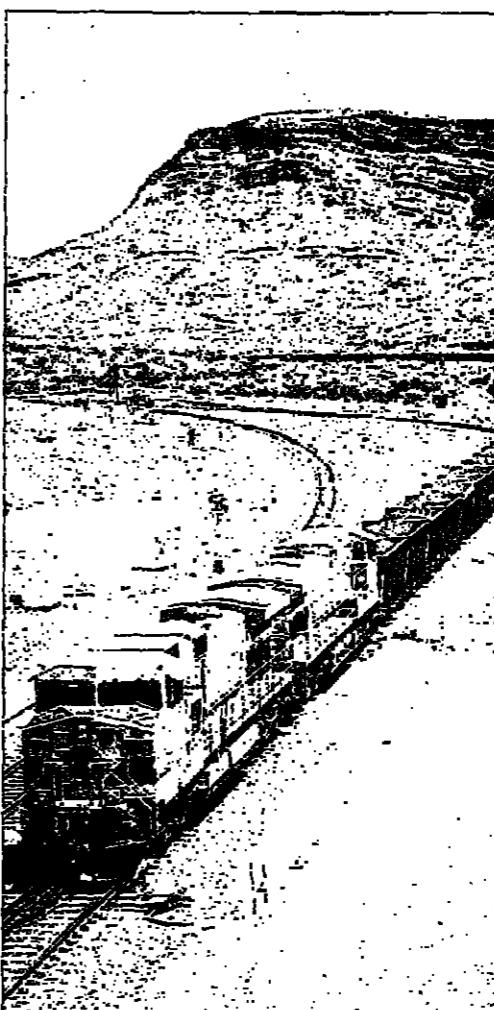
The environmental protesters who stand outside Rio Tinto's London head office chanting "Rio Tinto stinks" and other slogans clearly have a less romantic slant on things. To them, the exploitation of exhaustible natural resources is indefensible, whatever the steps taken to paper over the cracks. Questions are raised about the impact on local communities, both financially, and in terms of their health and wellbeing.

It is hardly surprising that Rio Tinto devotes considerable resources to the ethical/environmental question. The company is soon to publish a code of business practice, two years in the making, which spells out company policy on

CORPORATE PROFILE: Rio Tinto



Mine giant clockwise, Leon Davis, chief executive, left, and Bob Wilson, chairman, who are working to integrate Rio Tinto operations worldwide; iron ore being taken to the port of Dampier; stackers and shiploaders at the port of Tanjung Bara; and the copper smelter at Bingham Canyon



community relations, corporate governance and other sensitive topics.

The RTZ Corporation plc and CRA Ltd came together in December 1995 in a dual-listed companies structure, trading in London and Sydney. After 18 months of consolidation, they adopted a common name, while remaining separate legal entities with separate share listings.

Management structure was reorganized, in March, into six product groups, aimed at reducing bureaucracy and shortening lines of communication. Three are based in Australia — Comalco (aluminium) in Brisbane; energy in Melbourne (the long-standing CRA base); and iron ore in Perth.

Other operations, including copper and gold, are driven from London, together with technology and exploration.

Key managers have been uprooted and transplanted to new posts around the world. The leaver structure is already generating cost savings of up

to \$250 million a year — five times the original forecasts.

Rio Tinto inclines to the long term for everything, from share price performance to future returns. Its core strategy is to concentrate on the development of large, long-life mines capable of delivering superior returns to shareholders over many years.

The company has endured a

difficult financial run recently, pegging its interim dividend, then seeing its shares fall off a cliff on the back of the financial crisis in South-East Asia.

The shares have fallen by more than a quarter since June, when they peaked at 1,109p. They closed at 755p on Friday.

It has yet to be seen whether the Asian turmoil will generate

a tidal wave, triggering recession in South Korea, Japan, China, and, ultimately, the West, or a ripple, intensifying local economic pressures.

America, Rio Tinto's most important market, has enjoyed extraordinarily high growth for years, and this is expected to continue, even if at a lesser rate. Economic recovery is expected to accelerate in Western Europe, the next most important bloc, while significant growth is expected in China, fuelled by huge infrastructure projects.

North America and Australia are the most important contributors to economic growth, followed by South America, Africa and Indonesia. Technical and operational problems seen in 1996 have been largely ironed out, although Australian coal remains problematic. Rio Tinto is locked in an old-fashioned battle with the unions over operations in the Hunter Valley, north of Sydney, and is in for a long fight.

Low productivity and high

costs are among the issues to be addressed.

Worldwide interests include Kennecott in Utah, which encompasses the Bingham Canyon mine, and is America's third largest copper producer. In Canada, iron and titanium provides pigment feedstock used in paints, coatings, paper and plastics.

Hamersley Iron in north-west Australia provides more than a third of all iron ore shipped from Australia to Japan. The ore is hauled 338 kilometres to Dampier on the coast in 226-carriage trains, loaded — and operated — by one person.

The Australian North West is also home to the Argyle diamond mine, source of pink diamonds sold independently since last year, when Argyle withdrew from the London-based Central Selling Organisation.

In 1995, Rio Tinto paid \$500 million for a 12 per cent stake in Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold, the American

group that operates Grasberg. It is expected to develop into the world's biggest copper mine, overtaking Escondida in Chile, in which Rio Tinto has a 30 per cent interest.

Operations in Papua New Guinea include Lihir Gold and Bougainville Copper — the latter abandoned in 1989 in the face of hit-and-run attacks by warring locals.

South African interests include the Palabora copper mine (39 per cent owned) and Richards Bay Minerals (50 per cent owned with Billiton), which mines heavy mineral sands on the coast of KwaZulu/Natal.

Rio Tinto has a range of publications describing its role as a "good corporate citizen". It has carried out a series of environmental audits, but its stated corporate values, according to Integrity Works, our independent analyst, are limited to mutual respect, active partnership and long-term commitment. It further believes in transparency and trust.

Ethical expression owes much to a basic stakeholder approach, including a heavy emphasis on community relations. This makes the company appear somewhat disjointed, compared with best practice, but a reference to human rights in the new code of business practice will put it in the vanguard of corporate ethics statements.

The company comes off badly in the "fat cat" league compiled by Crisp Consulting, which calculates that Mr. Wilson was 42 per cent overpaid in 1996, with emoluments of £1.27 million. The Crisp model suggests that £730.36 would have been more in keeping with the company's generally poor performance over the period.

The average pay of the (then) nine non-executive directors was also deemed excessive: amounting to 56 per cent more than the average pay of the non-executive directors for all FTSE 100 companies.

JON ASHWORTH

OUR VERDICT

Ethical expression ¹	7/10
Fat-cat quotient ²	4/10
Financial record	7/10
Share performance	6/10
Attitude to employees	6/10
Strength of brand	7/10
Innovation	8/10
Annual report	7/10
City star rating	8/10
Future prospects	7/10
Total	67/100

Ethical expression is evaluated by Integrity Works. The fat-cat quotient is based on the median pay of the nine non-executive directors for all FTSE 100 companies.

¹ Ethical expression is evaluated by Integrity Works. The fat-cat quotient is based on the median pay of the nine non-executive directors for all FTSE 100 companies.

² Total pay of the nine non-executive directors for all FTSE 100 companies.

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Gooch & Housego eyes AIM

GOOCH & HOUSEGO, a maker of precision optical components, is coming to the Alternative Investment Market, in a flotation that will make a millionaire of its 80-year-old chairman (Jon Ashworth writes).

Archie Gooch, who founded the company with Leslie Housego in a loft in 1946, will hold shares worth £2.8 million. Price Waterhouse Corporate Finance is adviser to the deal, which will raise £6 million for Gooch & Housego, and value the company at about £17 million. Funds will partly finance a new factory in Orlando, Florida.

Gooch & Housego made a pre-tax profit of £1.43 million (£1.06 million) in the year to September 30, on sales of £6.7 million (£5.95 million).

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Waiting in the wings for angels

Martin Waller meets a former actress who found a more fulfilling role as a theatrical producer



Sally Greene at the Criterion, which, in theatrical parlance, was "dark" when she bought it

There is, it is generally accepted in the acting profession, a genuine lack of parts for women in the theatre beyond a certain age — unless you happen to be called Maggie Smith. There are therefore very few women who make the leap from the *soubrette* to the mature character actress. There are even fewer who progress instead to theatrical producer.

Sally Greene, rescuer of both the Richmond and the Criterion theatres, has done so, even if she admits that in her days on the stage she was one of the world's worst actresses.

"I was the sort of actress who was always being hit over the head by the scenery. I acted opposite Peter Ustinov once, and the fake mole on his cheek got stuck to mine. One night in Worthing I was playing an archangel, and my wings got stuck in the doors.

"I hated it. Finally I became an assistant stage manager."

Today she is also chief executive of the unrelated Criterion Productions, launched under the Business Expansion Scheme in 1993 as a commercial venture to put on West End plays, although not necessarily at her theatre. As the 230 investors who backed the initial cash-raising will shortly be aware, she is after their cash again. She also has a hit-list of another 1,000 who she thinks might also be interested.

Theatrical production, *pace* Cameron Mackintosh, is not the road to riches. Its traditional backers are generally known as angels because their rewards tend to be in heaven, or at backstage parties. Criterion Productions has now gone through about £200,000 of the £500,000 raised four

years ago, and there is no promise the £500,000 or more Ms Greene is now looking for will not go the same way.

Ms Greene started her career as theatrical impresario with one advantage — her first project, the ailing Richmond Theatre, in southwest London, was bought from her late father, a lawyer charged with selling it and a clutch of others as executor to the estate of the owner. She paid £90,000 and spent another £5 million refurbishing it. The Richmond became a charitable trust, paving the way for some support from the local authority.

She had already acquired a

couple of other advantages, a course in business management and a rich property developer as a husband. He is Robert Bourne, chairman of Clubhaus, the golf club operator, and formerly at Ex-Lands. Friends say much of the hospitality surrounding her theatrical ventures comes out of their own pockets.

The Criterion in Piccadilly Circus was "dark", in theatrical parlance, when she bought it for £1 million from Mountleigh Properties in 1992. "They wanted someone who could raise money. That's what I am quite

good at." The lights went on again, and she brought in stars such as Kenneth Branagh. Next week a touring production by the Royal Shakespeare Company of *Cyrano de Bergerac* arrives there, starring Anthony Sher.

The initial BES issue to launch her production company was backed by Charles Fry of Johnson Fry Securities, although he is not involved this time around. "Charles said it was the only BES company he had been involved with where there were no complaints." The story has it that he at first refused. Then a bouquet arrived at his

office. City financiers, at least male ones, are not often required to field 20 white roses; it seems to have done the trick.

Mr Fry certainly remains a fan. "She is enthusiastic, determined and full of energy," he says. "If anyone is going to be a success in the industry, I hope she will be."

Despite such supporters, Ms Greene may be about to suffer an unusual reversal. The National Lottery board will this week rule on a £13 million grant to build her a third theatre, on Islington Green. The redevelopment of the old Collins Music Hall is ambitious, taking in an art gallery, a specially engineered stage and a nearby branch of Waterstone's. It may also, politically, be a non-starter.

Chris Smith, the local MP and original sponsor, withdrew when he became Secretary of State for National Heritage. But with state-funded opera in disarray and theatres around the country having their grants cut, it may not be the time to advance such sums for an arts complex around the corner from Tony Blair's old house and a few steps from Granita restaurant.

Perhaps it is a memory of one terrible night in Worthing, but Ms Greene bristles at the word "angel" — "rather an old-fashioned term". Her supporters are investors, she insists, even if their investments may not pay off in terms of dividends or capital appreciation.

"I am interested in making huge profits — I would love to be a Mackintosh. But if you are an investor, you hope to get your money back — or at least to have a jolly good time."

Labour repaying debt, whatever next?

For economic ideas move in circles. Stand in one place long enough and you will see the same old ideas come round again. This adage certainly seems to be true for the public finances.

Tomorrow's PSBR figures should confirm that the Government is on course to record an annual deficit of only £10 billion or so. Indeed, it is perfectly plausible that it will soon be in surplus. This prospect recalls the experience of the late 1980s, when there was briefly a large surplus under Chancellor Lawson. This time, though, the surplus could last rather longer — courtesy of our friends across the Channel.

Incredible though it now seems, some of the more incoherent commentators were so impressed by the Lawson surplus that they forecast the paying off of the national debt and the consequent elimination of the gilt-edged market. But by 1993-94 the deficit had ballooned to £45 billion.

What did for the Lawson surpluses was the very thing that characterised the whole period — gross over-optimism. The negative PSBR was the product of a raging boom in the economy, which could not be sustained. The potential borrowing problem was exacerbated when Chancellor Lawson cut taxes in the 1988 Budget and plans for government spending in future years were raised substantially.

After the economy tipped into recession, the consequences of spending laxly combined with earlier tax reductions were laid bare — hence the £45 billion deficit. But just as the euphoria was overdone in the late eighties so the gloom was overdone in the 1990-92 recession.

Granted, a decent economic recovery, then restraint on expenditure, would produce a much lower PSBR. In fact, Chancellors Lamont and Clarke enacted a huge rise in taxes so that the PSBR has fallen even more. The result is that we may soon be back in the Lawson situation. But can we avoid re-enacting the next stage of the fiscal cycle? If you

believe the gloomsters about the state of the economy then we probably won't. Current favourable indicators may not be broken any fundamental improvements in its working but simply reflect what the cynics call the "sweat spot" of the economic cycle: the good bit that fools you just before things go badly wrong.

Call me naive, if you like, but I think things are a good bit better than that. Although the economy must slow down next year — either naturally or as a result of higher interest rates — there is no need for it to undergo a recession. The current expansion is healthier than the late 1980s boom. It could drag along for several years. That being the case, tax revenues will go on rising sweetly. What happens to public borrowing will then depend upon government policy on taxes and spending.

Such is where our European friends come in. It might well be that even without the EMU project, sheer fiscal conservatism on the part of our new Labour Government would ensure low borrowing numbers until kingdom come. But just as the euphoria was overdone in the 1990-92 recession, a decent economic recovery, then restraint on expenditure, would produce a much lower PSBR. In fact, Chancellors Lamont and Clarke enacted a huge rise in taxes so that the PSBR has fallen even more. The result is that we may soon be back in the Lawson situation. But can we avoid re-enacting the next stage of the fiscal cycle? If you

believe the gloomsters about the state of the economy then we probably won't. Current favourable indicators may not be broken any fundamental improvements in its working but simply reflect what the cynics call the "sweat spot" of the economic cycle: the good bit that fools you just before things go badly wrong.

As it is, the aim of preparing for EMU provides a bulwark against this pressure. The Maastricht treaty requirements are only the start. On a strict interpretation, they lay down that to be eligible to join EMU, a country's public deficit must not exceed 3 per cent of GDP, and its accumulated public debt be not more than

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New York Dow Jones
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Tokyo Nikkei Avg
15082.52 (-753.84)



Youngsters need to be equipped with a full set of financial literacy skills if they are to cope with an increasingly sophisticated financial world

Young people should learn financial literacy at school

Derek Wanless explains how teachers can improve the way children prepare for life in the real world

Should financial literacy skills be as familiar to young people as IT skills? I believe that this is a fundamental question which must be debated fully if we are to equip young people to cope with an increasingly sophisticated financial world.

There are 16,000 different financial products on sale in Britain today, yet how many of the customers for them are properly equipped to know which they should buy? Individuals increasingly need the right mix of abilities and skills to be able to venture confidently into new financial products.

Today, delegates are gathering at the Russell Hotel in London to debate the role of financial literacy in the school curriculum. They have been invited jointly by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and NatWest Group. This may not sound momentous, but it is the first time that either QCA or its constituent parts have jointly run a curriculum review conference in partnership with a private sector company. The purpose of the conference is to inform QCA thinking on financial literacy when it reviews the curriculum in schools in the year 2000. It will have the findings of specially commissioned research from the Demos think-tank to highlight the need for change.

If the business of business is

business, then why is NatWest Group dedicating its time, expertise and resources to the conference and more widely to the issue of financial literacy? The answer is that the successful business of today and tomorrow is evolving beyond being ruled solely by simple financial measures. The business of banking rests on the successful management of risk, which in turn is crucially dependent on the skills and ability of individuals, both as customers and staff to manage money, whether that be at home or in the workplace.

In a climate of constant change, we believe that financial literacy is an essential set of skills to have, not a luxury. The definition of financial literacy prepared for NatWest Group by the National Foundation for Educational Research is "the ability of individuals to make informed judgments and to take effective decisions regarding the use and management of money". This does not mean knowing what APR might mean but to have the skills to plan confidently, solve problems and take decisions when it comes to financial management. This does require knowledge, but

skills, understanding and values also play an important part in being an effective manager of money.

Financial literacy does not exist in a vacuum, but must adapt and change as the world changes. The intensity of global competition and the ever-increasing speed of technological development are two pressures upon which business is all too aware.

Further dramatic change is inevitable within society as we approach the next millennium. This is the context that the delegates to the QCA/NatWest conference must consider. To help, we commissioned Demos to describe the potential trends that will affect the way in which financial skills are needed in the new millennium.

Demos pointed out that values are changing. Younger generations are interested in personal fulfillment and less concerned with issues of security. This has meant that traditional trust in institutions has fallen while solidaristic groups based on shared interests or ideals are experiencing a renaissance. This phenomenon sets the backdrop to other changes facing society.

Patterns of work are changing. Companies are well aware of the technological drivers of change that are revolutionising organisational structures. Technology and competitive pressure demand knowledge workers, flatter structures and shift the emphasis from the single organisation to networks of resource producers. These changes have huge implications for the individual and for the need for financial literacy. Flexibility is embodied in reduced tenure, performance-related pay and earnings swings. Effective money management skills are a must in such an environment.



Wanless: promoting skills

BUSINESS LETTERS

Employees want to know how much profit is enough

From Mr Paul H. Tipler

Sir, Richard Miles's Corporate Profile of Lloyds TSB (November 10), while stopping short of ascribing Sir Brian Pitman as the Messiah of the banking industry, appears to have missed the fundamental shortcomings of his corporate philosophy.

Lloyds TSB's approach, if emulated throughout industry, would surely cause such social and environmental disruption that the fabric of society itself would be undermined. The bank has led the way in a retreat from overseas markets, cost-cutting, horizontal and vertical inte-

gration — in such a way that staff and customer interests seem to be largely ignored. No visible ethical policy even exists.

Many employees (myself included) are asking just how much profit is enough. The banking industry faces powerful challenges from, among others, Halifax, Virgin Bank and supermarkets, such as Sainsbury's and Tesco, which have a much lower cost base.

But to counter this with a philosophy solely aimed at maximising shareholder value, with all other legitimate objectives subjugated, will surely prove to be narrow and

destructive in the extreme. Sir Brian should be commended for his honesty concerning his objective. However, at a recent Chartered Institute of Bankers' meeting in Bristol, his apparent admiration for American banks that aim to reduce their merged bank resources by up to 40 per cent was disappointing if not surprising.

Though welcome, his acknowledgement that the social cost was too great for Britain was spoken with apparent regret. The bank may continue to score abysmally on ethical expression, and probably lower still on its attitude to employees.

Full marks should not have been awarded for share performance achieved at such a price. Hopefully, investors in People were not aware of the full picture when recognising areas of the bank for their award in October 1996.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL H. TIPLER

(National Council Member, Movement for Democracy, 3 Highfield Grove, Horfield, Bristol)

BA repeats history in removing the colours

From Mr J. V. Buckland

Sir, Mr David Askern's letter (November 13) rightly points out BA's mistake with their new colours. But they are only repeating their past mistakes. In the 1950s, when it was BOAC (Better on a Camel), the schoolboys of that era decided it took the Union Jack off the front of its brochures because it might upset some of the

passengers. Whether profits increased has never been admitted, but it was not too long before the national colours returned. But what does one do with managers who persist in repeating past blunders?

Yours sincerely,
J. V. BUCKLAND
28 Deeside Avenue,
Fishbourne, West Sussex

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High on the brow and tall in the saddle

Twas the sixth weekend before Christmas. You could tell that because all sorts of new series were conveniently starting six-part runs and because it couldn't quite decide what sort of weekend to be. Was it still the class and quality of autumn or the cheap, cheerful and commercial that traditionally signals the onset of winter? Julian Clary, Lily Savage and a new series of *The Past Show* thought they knew.

But they had reckoned without Sir Isaiah Berlin, Julius Caesar and the Battle of Hastings. For once in my reviewing life I was going highbrow, safe in the knowledge that the worst that could happen was to fall asleep halfway through a Michael Ignatieff introduction and suddenly discover it was Monday.

The two-part tribute to Berlin, heavily stamped "not to be shown in his lifetime", arrived late in the schedules — late not just in terms

of last-minute but also, well, late. Still sober? That was the great unasked question as *The Making of a Hedgehog* (BBC2) and *Freedom and Its Enemies* (BBC2) got under way at hours of Friday and Saturday night normally reserved for frivolity rather than philosophy. You needed to be.

Both films were the product of one long interview but they were divided by more than the Second World War. Friday night, from the moment he over-elaborately introduced his subject as "the last great Jewish intellectual of tsarist Russia", was the torturing of Ignatieff. This he discovered early, when the straightforward question: "You then went to St Paul's School?" was met with: "Well, don't forget, I had very little imagination." I realised I was going to enjoy this.

It proved, but goodness it was hard work. One of the reasons for this became more apparent on Saturday, when Ignatieff, having mastered the art of nodding and shaking his head at the same time, had a much better time of it. As they discussed liberalism, pluralism and other -isms I had never heard of, excerpts from Berlin's broadcasts in the 1950s and 1960s showed how that distinctive voice had changed. The fluency was still there but the precision had faded with age, making way for something deeper, darker and occasionally difficult to understand.

But if one or two punchlines were lost (Ignatieff nodded and smiled encouragingly, knowing the moment had passed) and one or two I was not clever enough to understand, there were enough that made it through to make this an enjoyable, if rather tiring, 90 minutes. I felt somewhat embarrassed about warming quite so enthusiastically to the story about Churchill confusing Irving Berlin with Isaiah (so much for my

scholarly pretensions) but less so about logical positivism, which Berlin said he didn't believe in at all but found convenient because it swept away a lot of tedious metaphysics and all those second-rate philosophers who couldn't do it. Ignatieff smiled. I empathised with the second-rate.

My colleague Melvyn Bragg is fond of a scholarly chat. His problem on last night's *South Bank Show* was getting one. The subject was Iain Banks (or Iain M. Banks in science-fiction mode), a writer from a generation reluctant to take anything too seriously, least of all themselves.

For the first ten or 15 minutes, Tony Kony's film was dominated by two images. The first was "the vast and ruddy frame" of the Forth Railway Bridge, that Banks both lives by and writes about. The second was of Bragg, desperately trying to get his subject to take himself seriously. For a while it looked as though the best he would achieve was Banks's claim that his main aim in writing science fiction was "to reclaim the moral high-ground of space-opera for the Left". Bragg looked like a man who didn't altogether approve of science fiction.

Then came the breakthrough — the word "dystopia" had to look it up. Bragg looked revitalised. Suddenly Banks was away, his

intellect finally unleashed. "There is a religion around now that makes sense, it's called science." Bragg's eyes lit up. Did somebody say science? After that, the pair chatted cleverly ever after, while Peter Capaldi, one of the stars of the marvellous television adaptation of *The Crow Road*, read extracts that intrigued more than they immediately tempted.

austere combination produced such watchable television as it was improbable as it was impressive.

No problems with the opening ten minutes to *War Walks* (BBC2, Friday), which suggested more populist ambitions, a fact quickly confirmed by the sight of Professor Richard Holmes, the military historian, riding a medieval warhorse. Name of Thatch, apparently.

While Caesar came, saw but couldn't be bothered to conquer Britain, this was the story of how a Norman duke did so, 1,100 years and assorted Dark Ages later. Holmes is an accomplished storyteller, but what he really excels at is convincing you that the outcome of the Battle of Hastings is in doubt, when you've known from the age of eight that it isn't. Eventually, however, not even he could prevent nice King Harold getting one in the eye. The rest, as they say, is tapestry.

REVIEW

Matthew Bond



BBC1

6.00am *Business Breakfast* (94814)

7.00 BBC Breakfast News (T) (9272)

9.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (1) (5546814)

9.25 Style Challenge (556594)

9.50 *Kirby* (T) (5528861)

10.30 *Change That* from Tatton Park Country Estate in Cheshire (4834863)

10.55 *The Really Useful Show* (T) (7842553)

11.35 *Real Romeo* (2269794)

12.00 News (T) and weather (6223185)

12.05pm *Call My Bluff* (9517665)

12.35 *Give Us A Clue* (225282)

1.00 One O'Clock News (T) and weather (67885)

1.30 *Regional News* (8473494)

1.40 *The Weather Show* (5983155)

1.45 *Neighbours* (T) (4438672)

2.05 *Quincy* (T) (2946272)

2.55 *Womans Best of Blankety Blank* (7963765)

3.30 *Playdays* (810407) 3.35 *Enchanted Lands* (123104) 4.00 *Foodie Doh's Revolving Recipes* (983814) 4.18: *Noah's Island* (7618965) 4.40: *Goosebumps* (6216901) 5.00: *Newsround* (5545403) 5.10 *Blue Peter — An Endless Special* (T) (5305340)

5.35 *Neighbours* (T) (3780308)

5.00 Six O'Clock News (T) and weather (291)

6.30 *Regional News* (543)

7.00 *This is Your Life* Michael Aspel invites another personality to take a trip down memory lane (T) (7291)

7.30 *Here and Now*: *Top Gear* Chris Choi investigates the national shortage of *Teletubby* toys which has enraged customers up and down the country and driven parents to desperate lengths (T) (727)

8.00 *EastEnders* Ian's life is turned upside down (T) (3611)

8.30 *Sparkle* Beth Colette arranges for Ashley to meet an attractive divorcee (2746)

9.00 Nine O'Clock News (T) and weather (1088)

9.30 *Hotel* The Adelphi's house manager, Katy, is left in the lurch by the departure of a receptionist (T) (65530)

10.00 *Panoramas: The People's Monarchy?* What has the Palace learnt from the public reaction to the death of Diana, Princess of Wales? (T) (5674674)

10.40 *On Side John Inverdale* presents the sports magazine. Tonight he talks *Formula One* racing with Damon Hill and new team boss Eddie Jordan, rugby with outspoken Aussie David Campese and tennis with Greg Rusedski (T) (458291)

11.30 *Film* '97 with Barry Norman Brad Pitt's latest outing, *Seven Years in Tibet*, about an Australian mountaineer who strikes up a relationship with the Dalai Lama; plus reviews *Keep the Aspidote Flying*, *Regeneration* and *Lawn Dogs* (T) (82494)

12.00 *Last Entertainers* (1978) Susanna thriller, with Roy Scheider, a CIA operative whose wife is killed in an ambush, leading him to believe that someone wants him dead. Directed by Jonathan Demme (T) (493686) Followed by *Weather*

1.40 BBC News 24 (5501321)

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BBC2

6.00am *Education: History — What is Its Future?* (48123) 6.30 *An English Education* (T) (62272)

7.00 *Sea Horn Breakfast News* (T) and signing (T) (5333561)

7.15 *Telebilities* (1971524) 7.40: *Smurfs' Adventures* (2287165) 8.05 *Blue Peter* (287562) 8.45 *Alphabe-Gram* (201369) 8.45 *Harry and the Hendersons* (195745) 9.00 *Spanish Cinema* (1020404) 9.30 *Clémentine* (2149302) 9.30 *Writing and Pictures* (4486017) 9.45 *Style* (4454727)

10.00 *Teenagers* (51524) 10.30 *Words and Pictures* (6765204) 11.00 *Car Eyes* (2715775) 11.15 *Top Gear* (3357682)

11.40 *Landmarks* (98021) 12.00pm *Job Bank* (5225343)

12.30 *Working Lunch* (82038) 1.00 *The Grandparents Game* (79054724) 1.05 *Jerzy Jerome* (1331088) 1.10 *The Art and Antiques Hour* (6304456) 2.10: *Going, Going, Gone* (6247307) 2.40 *News* (T) (3316458) 2.45 *Cloak of the Throne: Sab Coe and Slave Ovetti* (T) (7073185) 2.55 *News* (T) (8011582) 3.30 *Reedy, Reedy, Cook* (458) 4.30 *Through the Keyhole* (T) (1723388) 4.55 *Esther* (8565343) 5.30 *Today's The Day* (922)

6.00 *The Simpsons* (T) (449524)

6.20 *Bedtime Galaxies* (T) (T) (827265)

7.10 *The Car's the Star: The Chevrolet Corvette* (T) (72307)

7.30 *Making Masterpieces* Nell MacGregor traces the origins of Impressionism (T) (369)

8.00 *Trust Me, I'm a Doctor*: The causes and treatments for impotence: the risks and benefits of cervical cancer screening and a new hearing test for babies (T) (1253)

8.30 *Land of the Tiger* New series about the diverse wildlife of India's Keen region (T) (182104)

9.20 *Trade, Secrete* Professional bakers reveal tricks of their trade (T) (205433)

9.30 *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* (T) (T) (53272)

10.45 *Alan Partridge* (T) (512123)

11.30 *Newsnight* (T) (2265768) 11.15 *Oldie TV* (5503616) 11.55 *Weather* (488017) 12.00 *The Midnight Hour* (30470)

12.30pm *Learning Zone: The Making of Peter Snow* (T) (941018) 12.45 *Architecture in Britain* (58104) 1.10 *The Victorian High Church* (5637985) 1.35 *Victorian Dissenting Chapels* (8428760) 2.00 *Modern Languages* (56091) 4.00 *Greek Language and People 1-2/French Experience* (50215) 5.00 *Business and Training* (18437)

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10.30 *Newsnight* (T) (2265768) 11.15 *Oldie TV* (5503616) 11.55 *Weather* (488017) 12.00 *The Midnight Hour* (30470)

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AT THE TOP 46
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

BUSINESS

MONDAY NOVEMBER 17 1997

INDEBTED 48
Roger Bootle
on deficits
and surpluses



Financial turmoil prompts emergency meeting in China

By JAMES PRINGLE in BEIJING
AND JANET BUSH in LONDON

CHINA is holding a top-level meeting this week to review the turmoil in Asian financial markets and to find ways of heading off damage to its own economy.

The leadership in Beijing has stood on the sidelines watching as the Asian markets have buckled. However, now that the crisis, which started in Thailand, has spread to the region's economic powerhouses in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea and is badly hitting the

fragile economy in Japan, China feels increasingly threatened.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 index suffered a loss of nearly 5 per cent over the course of last week and is expected to come under further pressure in the days ahead.

Several Japanese banks and securities companies have had their credit ratings humiliatingly downgraded amid mounting concern about the instability of Japan's financial system.

On Friday, Standard & Poor's cut one of its ratings of Yamaichi Securities, one of Japan's big four brokerages, and IBCA

Europe's credit rating agency, lowered ratings on four Japanese banks. Yamaichi said yesterday that it was considering restructuring into three separate entities.

The meeting in Beijing is being organised by the State Council, China's cabinet, and will include officials from key government departments, the country's securities regulatory agency and banking officials.

Sources in Hong Kong said that President Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, the Prime Minister, and Zhu Rongji, a vice-premier and economics czar, would take part in, or

close monitor, the meeting. Discussions will focus on limiting financial risk in China's banking system. On the agenda is the possible reorganisation of the People's Bank of China, the central bank along the lines of the US Federal Reserve.

Analysts believe that the leadership's move is a signal that China faces a risk of banking insolvency unless it can curb the massive debts of the state-owned banks and reform the financial system.

China's four big state-owned banks have run up huge debts in their political role of keeping afloat loss-making, state-

owned enterprises. About 20 per cent of their total loans, worth an estimated \$212 billion, are believed to be irrecoverable.

China had hoped to sell some state-owned firms to relieve the burden on the financial system, but that now looks difficult given the collapse of Asian markets and, in particular, the fall in the Hong Kong stock market where Chinese "red-chip" companies were to be floated.

The Japanese Bond Research Institute, Japan's biggest credit rating company, last week said that the health of the Chinese central bank was declining and

that the four state banks were likely to be hard hit as state-owned enterprises went bankrupt. Amid signs of slowing growth, China is displaying some of the symptoms of its faltering Asian neighbours, including huge empty office blocks in Beijing and Shanghai. Demand for its manufactured goods is declining as currency devaluations in the region render them uncompetitive.

Millions of workers in state-run industries have lost their jobs, are under-employed, or are staying at home on a nominal income "waiting for work".

Rights case to earn millions for employees

By CHRIS AYRES

MILLIONS of pounds in compensation are expected to be paid out to 1,500 public sector employees after a High Court hearing today, during which the Government will admit that Britain broke European law on workers' rights for more than a decade.

The case applies to public sector employees whose jobs were transferred to the private sector during the 1980s. Many of them were either fired or found that their pay and conditions had drastically worsened with their new employers, in direct contravention of the Acquired Rights Directive adopted by the Council of the European Communities in 1977.

Dave Bradley, a refuse collector, had his pay cut by £60 per week to £185, his holiday entitlement almost halved to 15 days and his sick pay and pension scheme were abandoned. Mr Bradley was also forced to work compulsory overtime and his union was not recognised by his new employer.

Britain's three biggest unions — Unison, GMB and TGWU — claim that for ten years the Government knew it was in breach of European law and that under principles

set by a test case in Italy — known as the Francovich principles — workers who lost out as a result are entitled to compensation.

The Government has agreed that the workers have the right to sue and that during the 1980s Britain failed to meet its obligations under European law.

The decision has been welcomed by the unions as a landmark change in the Government's attitude towards employment rights.

Jack Dromey, national secretary of the TGWU, said: "For ten years Tory ministers deliberately broke the law because they wanted to promote a Dutch auction of who could pay the least to the fewest in the privatisation of public services.

"The public lost out as service standards tumbled. Public servants paid the price with cuts in pay, conditions and jobs, and the relationship between public authorities and private contractors was poisoned. This case will show future governments that never again can European law on workers' rights be broken with impunity."

Roger Poole, assistant general secretary of Unison, added: "The new Government has

been lumbered with a Tory legacy of illegality. Today's landmark ruling is a posthumous page in the last Government's book of injustice. Hundreds of thousands of low-paid workers who lost their livelihoods will welcome this as a signal of hope."

In 1993 persistent lobbying by unions helped to force the Government to incorporate the public sector workers into the existing Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations, known as Tupe, which formerly protected only private sector employees.

A year later the British Government was found guilty of deliberate law-breaking in the European Court of Justice, and a group of refuse collectors from Eastbourne, who had lost their jobs after they were transferred to the private sector, received compensation totalling £135,000.

Although some sources have claimed the compensation expected to be paid to the 1,500 workers could total more than £1 billion, more conservative estimates suggest that the workers will receive several thousand pounds each, making the total bill to the Government several million pounds.

A \$1 BILLION (£87 million) hotel development in Tokyo is the latest addition to Granada's Méridien Hotels chain. The hotel, Le Méridien Grand Pacific, is due to open next June as part of Tokyo's waterfront development with 884 bedrooms and 14 restaurants. Méridien has been awarded the management contract by the project's joint owners.

Keihin Electric Express Rail-way and the Keikyu hotel group, which owns the existing Méridien hotel in central Tokyo.

Méridien Hotels has expanded from 58 hotels to more than 90 since Granada acquired Forte almost two years ago. This has been achieved partly by rebranding Forte Grand properties. The target is 150 by

2000. Tokyo's Grand Pacific is one of 16 hotels under construction. Other locations include Mexico, Bali, Thailand, Yemen and the Philippines.

One of the most fertile hunting grounds for new contracts has been the Middle East and India region, where the company already has 16 hotels. It has six projects under development and 14 sites under review.

Peter Cardwell, Forte's London managing director, has been made managing director, Middle East and West Asia, to reinforce its position.

Méridien hopes to bolster its relatively small presence in the US by forming a marketing alliance with an established operator.

Companies, page 46

Tokyo links in Granada chain

By DOMINIC WALSH

Le Méridien Grand Pacific, Tokyo, is to open in June as part of Granada's fast-expanding Méridien hotel chain

Boeing chief faces \$1.2bn lawsuit

FROM OLIVER AUGUST
IN NEW YORK

PHIL CONDIT, the executive chairman of Boeing, is facing a class action suit alleging insider trading of \$1.2 billion (£705 million) worth of company shares. Boeing shareholders, including those in the UK, could win million-dollar compensation payments.

The world's largest aerospace company announced last month it was taking a \$1.6 billion charge to pay for severe production problems that would delay jet delivery.

The group's share price went into a tailspin and investors lost \$4 billion. The shareholders who filed the suit claim the chairman and a number of other executives knew of the production problems long before the announcement and must have been fully aware of them when they sold their own shares.

The shareholders also contend that the executives kept quiet about the problems to protect the stock-swap merger with McDonnell Douglas. If Boeing's share price had declined earlier, the deal may have failed. The suit alleges that in June the group had already experienced \$163 million in cost overruns which it failed to acknowledge. It

claims quarterly results published on June 30, only days before the merger went through, had been falsified.

Steve Berman, one of the shareholders' lawyers, said: "Management misled shareholders. When the truth came out on October 22 — well after the merger was complete — the stock market reacted violently and Boeing shareholders lost billions." British investors who bought Boeing shares between July 21 and October 22 may participate in the suit.

Mr Condit and Boyd Givan, the chief financial officer, sold more than 34,000 shares after the completion of the merger but before the profit warning. The group and its executives have denied any impropriety.

Barclays silent on NatWest

Barclays would not be drawn yesterday on renewed speculation that it is pushing for a merger with NatWest, amid reports that JP Morgan, the US investment bank, has been appointed to advise on its plan.

A spokesman said: "In common with all companies, Barclays continually monitors developments within its own industry." A merger with NatWest would bring large cost savings, but would almost certainly fall foul of UK regulators worried about the resulting market dominance in small and medium-sized lending and credit cards.

Barclays has used JP Morgan in the past, along with LEK, a firm of management consultants, but would not comment on whether they were being retained for a deal with NatWest, reportedly advised by Lazard.

Export cheer

Britain's small and medium-sized companies remain confident about export prospects in spite of sterling's strength, according to 31, the venture capitalist. A survey shows that 60 per cent of respondents think that sterling's appreciation has affected their export volumes to only a small extent or not at all over the past year. Only 24 per cent reported a significant reduction. Overall, the number of companies reporting a fall in the value of exports was matched by those seeing an increase. Significantly more companies expect exports to rise than to fall.

Liberty talks

Liberty directors are to meet institutional shareholders this week to try to win further support for Denis Cassidy, chairman, who faces calls for his resignation. The board hopes to find a buyer for the retailer, saying that moves by the Stewart-Liberty family will harm shareholder value.

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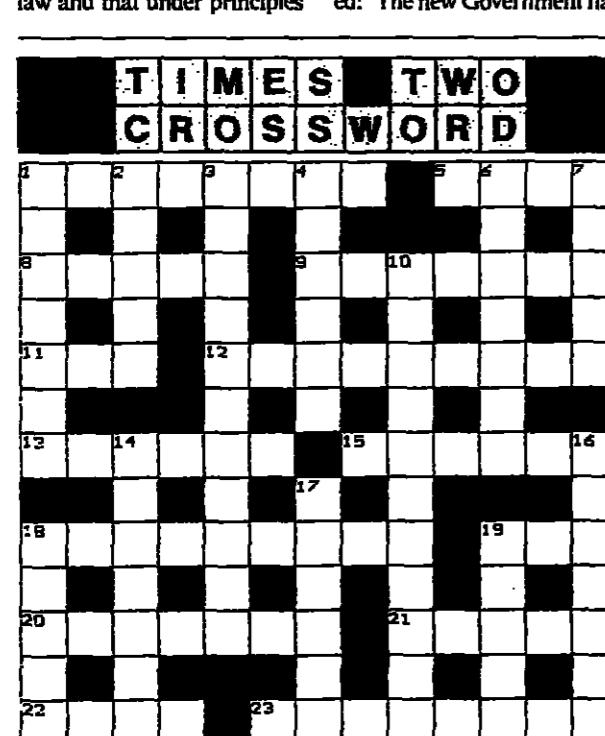
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No 1253

ACROSS

- Customary (8)
- Minor quarrel (4)
- A tree; geom. sheet (5)
- Shrink and die (7)
- Enemy (6)
- S. Am. mammal: a *Lima* lord (anag.) (9)
- Companionship (6)
- Horse-drawn carriage (6)
- Reduction of sentence; abatement (9)
- Garden implement (3)
- Tiny piece of text; conversation (7)
- Is; Aubrey's were *Brief* (5)
- Roman dress (4)
- One standing guard (8)

SOLUTION TO NO 1252

- 1 Homer 4 Simpson 8 Ornaments 9 Urn
- 10 Burn 11 Stradie 15 Solace 14 Crusty 17 Agar-agar
- 19 Cafie 22 Doh 23 Carteck 24 Moneyed 25 Hedge
- 5 Massacre 6 Sound 7 Nunney 12 Scratches 13 Stardom
- 15 Slacked 16 Hatred 18 Ashen 20 Marge 21 Itch

■ Tomorrow
British Steel will show how the strong pound has had an adverse effect on its half-year figures

■ Wednesday
Janet Bush looks at America's strategy as the euro approaches

■ Thursday
John Grieve-Smith on the necessity for the Government to have an economic policy

This week in THE TIMES



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